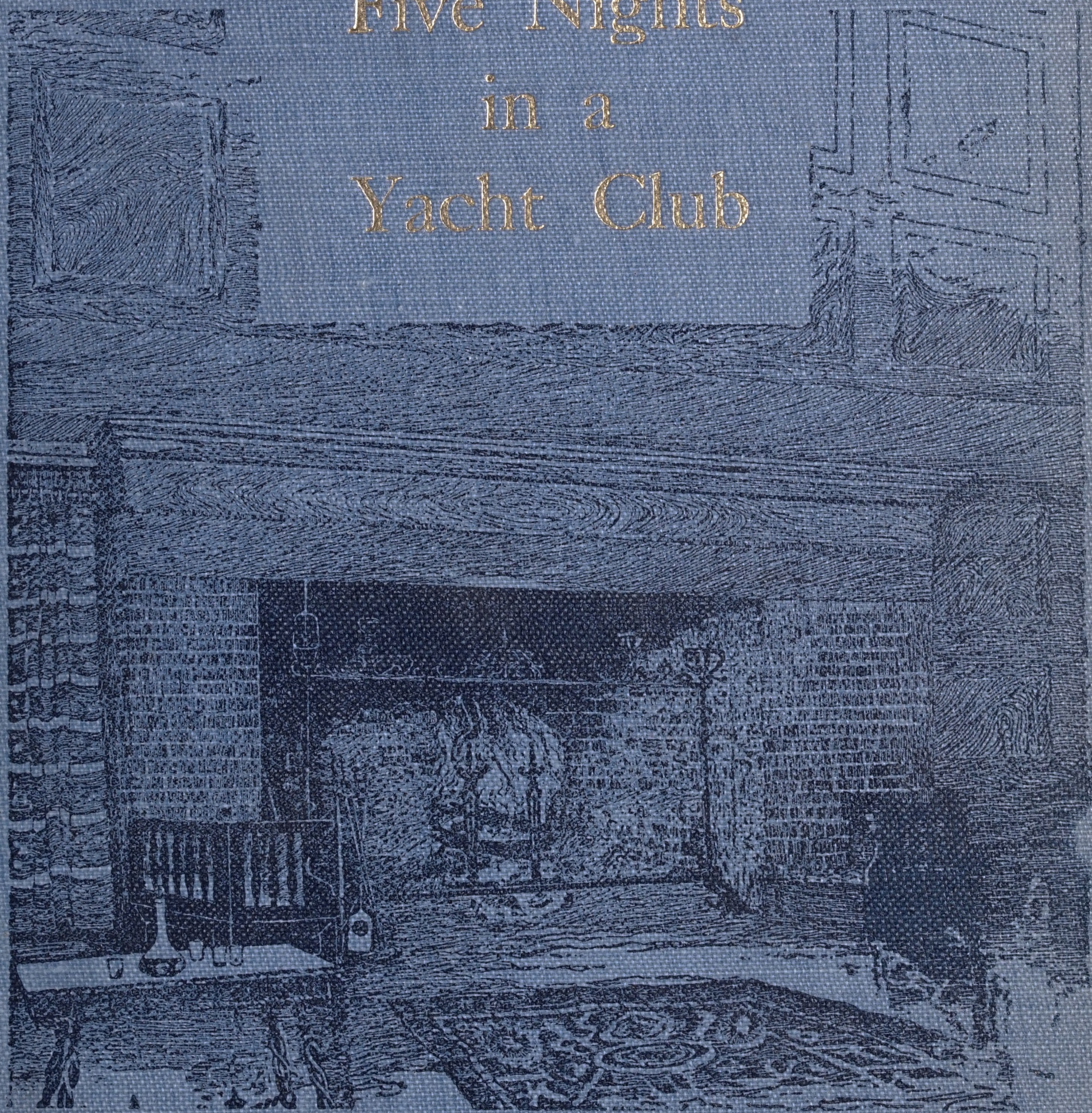


THE FOUR *and*
THE FIRE

or

Five Nights
in a
Yacht Club



By THOMAS FLEMING DAY

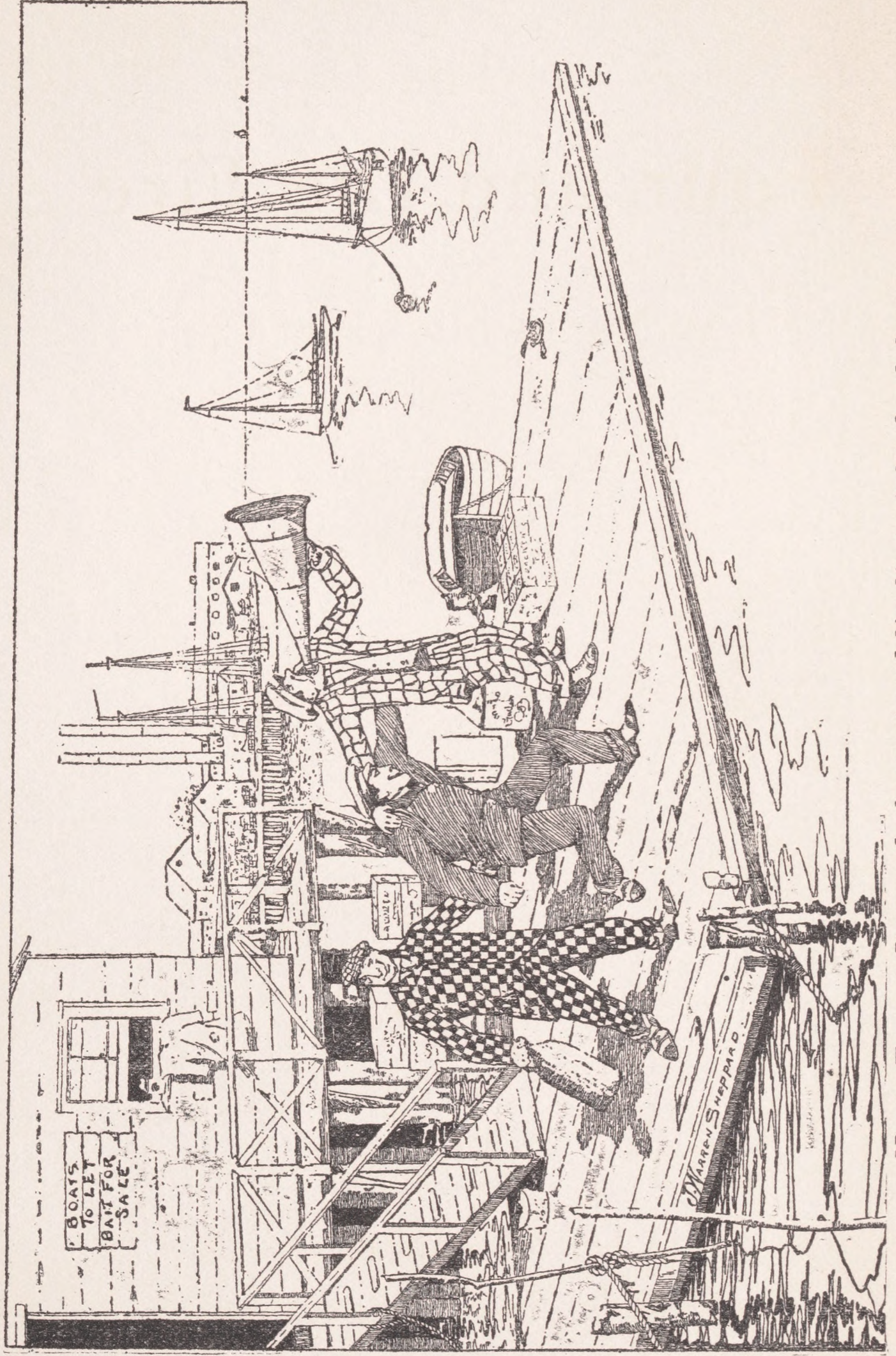


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NIGHT TWO—"It was the longest and liveliest night the club ever saw"

The Four and the Fire

OR

Five Nights in a Yacht Club

By Thomas Fleming Day

Author of "Songs of Sea and Sail," "On Yachts and Yacht Handling,"
"Hints to Young Yacht Skippers," "Adventures
of Two Yachtsmen," etc.

Illustrations by J. W. Sheppard

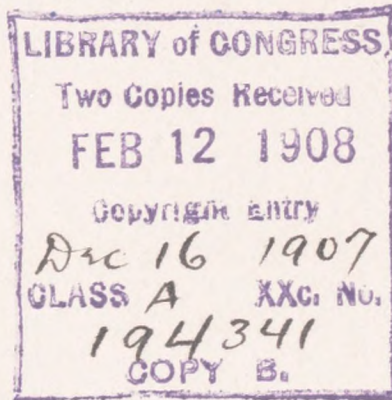


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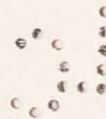
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NEW YORK



PRESS OF
THOMSON & CO.
NEW YORK

TO
Benjamin Torrens, M.D.
IN TOKEN OF THE AUTHOR'S AFFECTION
AND ESTEEM
THESE TALES ARE
INSCRIBED



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NIGHT TWO—“*When's the next meeting, Jack?*” said Bossy.

THE FOUR AND THE FIRE

THE annual meeting was over, the new officers chosen by the Senate and elected by Themselves and Company had been installed and made their speeches. The retiring Commodore had praised the Commodore-elect and the Commodore-elect had praised the retiring Commodore. Other nice things were said by other officers and better things ordered by those of whom they were said. The treasurer had assured the club it was never in better financial condition, and then read a statement that left all hands in doubt as to whether the club owed itself \$497.63 or whether somebody owed it to the club, but the fact that the \$497.63 existed somewhere or somehow was accepted as an evidence of prosperity, and all hands applauded the report. Great satisfaction was shown when the House Committee admitted that the bar had earned \$943.13, which along with \$648.92 disappeared in the restaurant, as this showed that the members were sustaining their ancient reputation of being better drinkers than eaters. In fact, the whole meeting was a success, but on account of several members hav-

ing to catch trains, or worse if they got home late, it was adjourned early, much to the displeasure of Mr. Rotorumpus, who had prepared an amendment to the by-laws forbidding ladies to be at the clubhouse after twelve midnight, not that it in any way concerned him, but because he knew the question would stir up a row and give him a chance to talk.

By ones, twos and threes, the members departed, leaving in front of the fire the four, Treadwell Slope, Jack Stayfast, Treport, and Bossington.

As you never met The Four, let me introduce them.

Treadwell Slope, or the Commodore as he was called, was a charter member, and a man of years in yachting. About the club if you spoke of or asked for the Commodore you meant Slope. Other commodores came and went like the tide, but Slope was a living rock; other commodores were known as Commodore Black or Commodore White, but *the* Commodore was first, last and always Treadwell Slope. He had held the office sixteen times, been elected to and inherited it. Whenever nobody else could be found to serve, Slope took the helm. If a com-

modore died, resigned, or was sent to jail, Slope filled out the term. He was honest, good-hearted, full of tact, and except when he had one of his cantankerous spells the cheeriest and most entertaining of companions.

Jack Stayfast was just the Commodore's opposite, rather talk than eat. Always at loggerheads with some of the other members. Usually in the wrong, but always willing to forgive the other man. When he came into the house it was like a gale of wind shooting into the harbor, everything rocked and roared. A fine sailor and full of boat knowledge, which he dispensed to the world at the top of his lungs. He and the Commodore were always together and always apart. They were never known to agree except on one subject—the club. They both believed it to be the greatest organization in the world. Yet while he loved the club, and would give his last cent and his last minute to insure its welfare, it was never properly managed. He never wanted to hold an office, but was always sore if none was offered him. Half his friends were his enemies, and half his enemies his friends. The epitome of Jack was uttered by old Commodore Warrant after we had laid Stay-

fast away in the Spring. Walking away from the grave we stood on the brow of the hill just above the Eastern gate to Longrest, and looked out over the lowlands to where a silver segment of the Sound spread its waters, living with white, wind-happy sails. Warrant stood looking for some minutes at the distant water, thinking perhaps of the days he and Stayfast had spent upon it together, sail comrades of years. Then turning around to me, he said, motioning back to where under the budding elms we had left him, "God has made better men, but never a better fellow."

Treport was much younger than either the Commodore or Stayfast. He was a good man on a boat in any berth, and a first-class, clever chap. He and the Commodore cruised much together.

Bossington was young, good-natured, but not overbrainy. When he first joined the club Stayfast had rescued him from the clutches of the gang, who had already worked off a rotten sloop on the green boy, and were bent upon plucking some more of his feathers before he cut his yacht-tooth. He swore by Stayfast and was usually to be found in his company.

NIGHT ONE

NIGHT ONE

"Sit down, Treport," said Stayfast, as the youngster got up and began looking for his coat, "you don't want to go home, you have no wife sitting up, and that place you dwell in is not a cheerful mausoleum by any means; here is a good fire, good grog, good company, and bad tobacco. It's not exactly Paradise, but it's as good an imitation as man is allowed to get up. Sit down, I tell you!"

"Darn it, man, it's late, and darker than the inside of old Dan's hat up my way," answered Treport, pausing.

"Dark? Well, that won't hurt you. You are not afraid of ghosts, be ye?"

"I might be if I saw one."

"Rats; there's no such thing. I've been all through this ghost-phantom-spirit business, and it's all rot. You never saw a man in your life who would own up that he ever saw one. It's always some friend of his, or he heard So-and-So say Tom this or Jack that saw one. Isn't that so, Commodore?"

"No," said the Commodore, "it isn't."

"Well, tar me for a backstay, Tred, you don't mean to say you've gone queer on that lay, do you?" laughed Stayfast, as Treport resumed his seat.

"Not exactly."

"Well, do you believe there is any such thing?"

"I don't know as there is any good reason why there shouldn't be; do you?"

"None, except that it's darn rot and I'm sane."

"What's going on now?" asked Bossington, pushing in his chair between them.

"Thought you'd gone home, Bossy?" said Stayfast. "Why, the Commodore is trying to hold up the ghostly end of an argument. Did you ever see anything of that rig beating about?"

"No, never did."

"I have," said Treport, "not defunct human, no, but I've seen the ghost of a vessel."

"Ghost of what?" put in Bossington.

"Of a vessel; you order the drinks and I'll spin it."

TREPORT'S STORY

As I told you, I have never seen a man ghost, but I have seen a schooner ghost, and it was this way. You remember the Director, the sloop the old man had before he bought the smoke boat? Well, he and me and Billy South and my brother Bob were off cruising in her one August. We'd been as far as Nantucket and were working back to the Westward; coming down from the Chop we had the fair tide all the afternoon and a good air and by eight bells were off Sekonnet. The old man and Billy were in one watch, and Bob and me in the other. We went off at eight, and then the wind was almost gone. At twelve, when I came out to take the helm, we were off Point Jude with a light air almost dead ahead and a nasty damp mist hanging about through which once in a while you could catch a glimpse of the lights on Blockers and the main shore.

The old man gave me the position on the chart and went below. Bob hadn't been feeling well, so I told him to go and lie down and I'd call if

I wanted anything. After checking the sheets all around, I got into a comfortable seat and started in to get as much as I could out of the sloop with what air was to be had. She wasn't a bad drifter and we were doing a little with what tide there was under our lee helping out. It's hard telling how far you can see with a mist about, but I guess I could have spotted vessels' lights half a mile off at any time.

I had stood over quite a stretch on the starboard tack and in coming about the weather jib-sheet fouled and I went for'ard to clear it. Stopping down I chucked the turn off the bitts and as I rose up looked to windward and there close on my weather bow was a small schooner. She was so close it startled me, for I hadn't seen anything of any vessel since I came on deck.

Getting aft I put the wheel up and hardened the sloop, as we seemed to be coming together. The schooner followed, but on coming to the wind again she seemed to be about where she was first, so we jogged along together. I looked her over; she was a small fisherman and had a handkerchief staysail and flying jib set.

Her persistence in sticking on my bow began

to worry me, and after about ten minutes I tacked. After belaying the jib-sheets I looked for him abeam, expecting to be under his stern—but no schooner. Looked forward and there she was on my weather bow. “So you tacked, too,” I said to myself; “not going to let me get away. Well, if it’s a race you want, all right.” The breeze now began to grow a bit and I took a pull on the main-sheet and then settled down to do my best at the wheel.

Finding the sloop made no gain I kept her full and tried to run through his lee; no use; then I tacked; she was on my weather bow again. Until this time I hadn’t the slightest feeling of apprehension, but after the last tack I began to get queer. It seemed to me as though I must get away from that vessel. I shook like a sail in the wind, and felt a funny sensation running up and down my backbone as though somebody was sliding a piece of ice along it. I wanted to call out but my voice seemed to be paralyzed.

Then I got almost wild in my efforts to get clear of the craft. I tacked and tacked, went first on one board and then the other, but no use; maneuver as I would she was always on my

weather bow. At last in desperation I slacked off the sheet, put up the helm and ran right off the wind. For some minutes I did not dare to look, but when I did glance astern she was gone. I breathed a joyful breath and was about to haul on the wind again when, happening to look ahead under the lee, there she was right off the bow. This was too much.

I jumped below and shook Bob.

"Come on deck," I said.

He came up, putting on his coat, and stood in the cockpit looking around. The yacht had come to the wind, the boom board off and the canvas shaking.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Do you see that schooner?" I asked, grabbing hold of his arm and pointing at the vessel.

My voice was full of excitement and my hand shook on his arm. He looked for a half a minute where I pointed, and then answered with a yawn:

"No! I don't see any."

"Don't you see that vessel on the bow?"

"No, I can't make her out," he replied after another look.

“Why, yes, you can; there she is close to; she’s a fisherman; see her staysail?”

Bob now turned and looked at me, then he sidled off toward the companion, and as he went down turned half round and said, “Take another drink!”

This was too much; my heart seemed to burst and I let out a yell that could have been heard for miles; the next I knew father was bending over me in the cockpit, his arm under my head, trying to force a drink of water past my lips.

“What’s the matter, boy?” he asked as I tried to sit up.

“The schooner,” I mumbled.

“What does he say?” inquired the old man of Bob and Billy.

“Something about a schooner. He called me on deck and wanted to know if I saw it. I guess he went to sleep and had a nightmare. I couldn’t see any schooner. Then as I went below he yelled and fell down,” explained Bob.

The next morning I told them the whole story and they laughed and jollied me all the rest of the day. Nightmare, they said; you went to sleep and dreamed it. You’re a nice one to

leave at the wheel, going to sleep, etc. As it was no use arguing over what you can't prove, I let them have their fling, but just the same it was no dream and I was wide awake.

That evening we made New London and anchored. Bob went ashore and bought a local paper; in that was the story of the sinking of a fishing schooner named Roger Williams off Block Island by one of the Boston steamers. She was bound to Noank with a full fare. The steamer ran her down, cut her in two and drowned seven of the crew. Father admitted that he had passed the steamer just before I came on deck and the accident must have taken place soon after. They might talk as they liked about my dreaming, but I am satisfied that the schooner that held on to our weather that night was the ghost of the Roger Williams bound in for her port, and nothing or nobody can make me believe otherwise.

* * *

"That's not bad, Treport," said Stayfast, "for a youth of your age and limited experience, and what is more, it is a bit original. I have always said that if we are to be haunted by the spirits of departed animate things we ought at least to

allow them the comfort of having their proper belongings to cart about with them. Therefore the phantom of an inanimate thing is just as likely to be knocking about as not. For instance, you take a real respectable ghost that has haunted a particular house for several generations, if he has got nothing else, he has at least established squatters' rights to his domicile, when along comes some improving cuss and pulls down the house. Now, what's to become of that ghost?"

"Why, he'll have to move into new quarters or else go back to spirit land and tie up," said Treport.

"Nonsense, my boy; the house being defunct, as it were, becomes a ghost and forever after leads a spirit existence. Just so with your schooner. I suppose there's thousands of defunct vessel ghosts sailing about. I'll bet Tred here has seen a dozen of 'em in his day."

"No," replied the Commodore, "I have not; but I have been on board a haunted yacht."

"Come, come, Commodore," laughed Bossington, "you don't mean it in earnest, do you?"

"You can laugh as you please," said the Commodore as he lit up another cigar, "but I be-

lieve there's something in this ghost business, although I don't want to say that I can say what it is, but there's something. You can't explain it and I can't, but there's something. I had a queer start myself once. I know what Stayfast will say, but it wasn't. When I saw it I was as sober as I am this minute."



NIGHT ONE—*Geo. Brooks*

THE COMMODORE'S TALE

It's over thirty years ago. Yes, must be all of that. I can't remember the exact year, but somewhere about seventy-four or seventy-five. I was in the iron business then and we used to import rails from Sheffield; cargoes of them; thousands of tons. A man named John Caldwell, who was one of the fellows who built the Pacific Road, and made his pile out of it, had a lot of dealing with our firm and I got to know him pretty well by having to correspond with him for some four or five years. Never saw him, though, until one day he came into the office and looked up the Boss.

Our place was on Front Street, a warehouse with an office in the back, the front being piled full of bar-steel and iron and all kinds of metal. The Boss had his desk in a room behind, under a skylight, and a dirty, dingy place it was, not like the offices you have to-day, with onyx walls and tiled floors. No typewriters then, my boys; all the letters had to be written with pen and ink, and many a night I worked in that place

until ten or eleven in order to keep up with my job.

It was pretty ghostly sometimes in that old hole, being there alone for hours; but I never minded it, although I got some nasty raps from



NIGHT ONE—*John Caldwell*

some of those steel bars when making for the door in the dark. In fact, I never thought of ghosts except the one that walked at the tail-end of the month.

Well, this day the Boss called me into the office where he was with a man, whom he intro-

duced as John Caldwell of St. Louis. I knew at once who he was, and we shook hands, and had a bit of a talk about rails, and then the Boss said:

"Tred, you go yachting, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, I do a little of it."

"You know something about these yachts, don't you? Know a good one when you see it?"

"Yes, sir, I guess I do."

"Well, Mr. Caldwell, here, wants to buy one and I don't know anything about such things, so I'll place the matter in your hands. You can have a talk and get to business."

That night I went up to the hotel and had a talk with Mr. Caldwell and the next day started out to hunt him up a yacht. They weren't very plenty in those days, and there were no brokers to do the hunting for you, so I went down to see a skipper I knew who lived down at Tompkinsville, Staten Island. He told me that the only boat about the size and price I wanted was lying over in Erie Basin, so we went over that afternoon. She was a big schooner, I've forgotten the name, but she was quite a crack in her day and not then over five years old. We hunted up the agent of the owner in a real-es-

tate office up in Fourth Avenue. He offered to part with the vessel for \$36,000. This was a good deal more than Caldwell wanted to pay, so we went up to the hotel and saw him. He turned the bargain down, much to the disgust of my skipper friend, who hoped to get the job of running her.

Well, I started in on another hunt and learned that there was a smaller schooner lying up in Flushing Bay that could be bought cheap. This boat was *Loiterer* and she had been out of commission for a couple of years and was in pretty bad shape, but we got her cheap, \$5,000 was the price; but it cost nearly twice as much again to put her in shape. I had her towed to Carll's yard at City Island, and they were nearly two months over the job.

While she was fixing up, Mr. Caldwell stayed at Newport, and when the boat was done he wrote me to bring her down there. The Boss gave me thirty days' leave and I made ready to start, having shipped a crew of six all told. But I forgot to tell you that when we bought the schooner we looked up her record and found she had changed hands about a dozen times since she was built; nobody seeming to keep her over

more than one season. She had been owned in Boston, Newport, Baltimore, and had at one time been out to China. Her last owner I never saw, as he was in Europe, and we made the deal with his lawyers.

She had a good-sized main cabin and three staterooms, one large one forward and two on the other side. In the saloon was a biggish standing table with a swinging lamp over it and a glass rack. I'm telling you this so as you will understand better what follows.

When I got aboard I took the room farthest aft, and that night, as we were at anchor in Hart Island Roads with no wind, I turned in about eleven o'clock. I lay with my head aft, and left the door of the room open. From this position I could see across the table and the door of the large room on the other side. It was pretty warm and for some time I couldn't get to sleep.

At last I dropped off with my face turned to the side of the ship. I was awakened by hearing somebody come down the steps into the cabin, and thinking it was the sailing master I turned over to ask him what the time was and if there was any show of wind. But before I could speak the person passed quickly along the other

side of the table and went into the large state-room.

I saw at once that it was not the sailing master or steward. It was a well-built, light-haired man, dressed in a loose white shirt and white trousers. For a minute or two I thought perhaps it was one of the crew, sent to fetch something, but as he did not come out I jumped out of bed and went to see what he was at in there, as the crew had no business in the cabin. Pushing the door wide open, for it was half-swung-to, I looked in; the room was empty. Thinking there might be a door leading forward, I got a match, lit the lamp and searched thoroughly, but the bulkhead was solid. I now began to feel a bit mystified. But still thinking it was one of the crew, I went on deck and called the lookout aft. He came along the deck and stopped in the light of the companion. He had on a heavy black coat and regular sailor's hat, and I saw at once he was not the man.

"Who was that came into the cabin just now?" I asked.

"Nobody, sir; I didn't see anybody," he replied.

"Has anybody been on deck?"

"No, sir."

"Where's the sailing master?"

"Turned in, sir."

"The rest of the crew?"

"All below, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"I'll go and see, sir."

"Very well."

The man went forward and below and soon came back. "They are all below, sir," he said. Then he asked, his curiosity getting the better of his discipline, "Did you see anybody about, sir?"

"I thought I did, but never mind; just keep your eye on the companion, will you?"

"All right, sir."

I went below and turned in after another look around, but could not sleep and was glad to get up when I heard the first stir on deck. The next day on our way up the Sound I kept thinking it over and tried to persuade myself that it had been a bit of nightmare and to take comfort in that thought.

That day the wind being slack we only made Morris Cove and went in there to anchor. I determined to get good and sleepy before turn-

ing in, so sat up until after twelve yarning with the skipper. Just after the bell struck, the steward, a little Englishman, who had knocked about on the sea all his life, came up and asked if I wanted anything; if not, he would like to turn in.

"Nothing, thank you, steward," I answered; "you can leave the brandy and soda out, that's all." For in those days no gentleman drank whiskey.

The skipper saying good-night I finished my smoke and turned in with my face away from the door and soon went to sleep. I was started out of it by hearing somebody in my room; I turned over with a start and found the steward standing by my bunk.

"Did you call me, sir?" he asked.

"No, steward," I replied.

"Very well, sir; I thought I 'eard you."

The next morning after the skipper had finished his breakfast and gone on deck, I said to the steward, who was fussing around the table, evidently trying to open a talk:

"What made you think I called you last night?"

"Well, sir," he says, "I 'ad a kind of a queer start I hain't got over just yet, sir."

"A queer start?"

"Yes, sir. I thought 'as you come to my door and knocked and says, 'For God's sake, steward, get hup, 'e's murdered the Captain.' I jumps hout o' my bunk an' opens the door an' sees you go into the saloon 'ere, sir. Then I comes an' wakes you hup."

"You must have been dreaming."

"Perhaps I was, sir;" then he added, after a pause, "You don't walk in your sleep, do you, sir?"

"Walk in my sleep? No, never heard I did."

"Perhaps not, sir."

After the steward went forward to his china shop I sat for some time thinking. I was afraid to go more into details with him for fear he might suspect that I had seen or heard something strange and this would at once make him communicative to the crew and skipper, and knowing sailors as I did, meant that we would be without hands just as soon as we made Newport, so I decided to sit still and wait for further doings; but you can believe that I would have given a month's salary—and that meant something in those days,—to be out of that yacht.

That night we made Newport about nine

o'clock and went into the harbor and anchored. After all was snug I ordered the boat and went on shore, determined never to sleep on that vessel again. Mind you, I wasn't sure that I had seen anything or that there was really anything queer about her, but I had a feeling that I'd sleep more comfortable out of her than in. A sort of nervous dread had taken possession and I was completely off my man.

I found Mr. Caldwell and he was glad to see me, and at once proposed that we start on a cruise East. I made a very lame attempt to get out of it by saying I must return to work.

"Not at all," he said. "Mr. Rich wrote me that he had given you thirty days and as much more as you wanted and you are to go with me. I have invited two other men, friends of mine from the West, and you must go with us; I won't hear of your leaving. How is the yacht?"

I told him she was a good sailer and very comfortable, for so she was, and then very reluctantly promised to go, bracing myself with the hope that company would make things more cheerful.

The next morning I went on board to tell the sailing master of the cruise and to see about

water and stores. When I got on board I found that the skipper had gone ashore.

After a few words with the steward, he beckoned me into my berth and, closing the door, said in half a whisper:

"The master's left 'er, sir."

"Herbert left her?" I inquired. "What for?"

"'E seen it last night, sir, sittin' at the saloon table."

"Seen what?" I asked, although I knew the moment he opened his head what was coming.

"Same as I did, sir."

"Same as you did—what's that?"

"The man in white, sir, same as I seen the night I thought you called me."

"Did you tell the skipper that story?" I asked.

"So 'elp me, sir, I never mentioned it."

This was a lie, I knew, but it was no use saying so.

"Well, don't say anything more about it."

"I won't, sir; but did you see it, sir?"

I couldn't lie to the man, and it was no use being evasive, so I answered, "Yes."

"What is 'e, sir?"

"How the devil do I know?" for I was angry at having to own up.

"Very good, sir;" and he opened the door and went forward.

Here was just what I expected. What to do I could not think. I did not have the courage to tell Mr. Caldwell, for even with what I had seen and heard it would be difficult to persuade a man of his stamp, that I was anything else but drunk or crazy. And then to have to own up that you had been instrumental in loading a man down with a haunted yacht was a rather disagreeable proposition. After thinking I decided to pay off and discharge the whole crew and ship another, giving Mr. Caldwell the excuse that I found them a poor lot. This I did, although the steward expressed a desperate willingness to remain if I would double his wages.

But I found that shipping a new crew right in the height of the season was a difficult matter. All that was left were the scruff, but after some searching I got four men, a cook, and steward, but there wasn't a sailing master to be had who could be trusted to go where we wanted to. At last I remembered an old yachting friend of mine who was laid up doing nothing, and determined to wire him to come on. This was George

Brooks; you never knew him, as he passed out before your time.

Brooks had been in the revenue service early in the war and then went into the navy; in sixty-five he got out of that and ran a ship between New York and the Southern ports. Afterwards he took to shore and for two or three years went sailing with me on holidays and Sundays. He knew the coast from Quoddy Head to Rio Grande like a book.

I told Mr. Caldwell about him and wired him to come on. He came up the next day on the Bristol and I met him at the wharf; we had breakfast and then I took him down into a quiet place and over the table told him the whole story.

Brooks listened without a word until I got spun out. Then he said: "My boy, you are green. If you'd been to sea as long as I have, you'd have seen through the game at once. That steward is at the bottom of the whole, you can bet on that. He gave himself away when he offered to stay if you doubled his shot. Ten to one but he had a friend he wanted to put in Herbert's berth, and part of the game was to get the sailing master over the side."

"But the sailing master saw it," I interrupted.

"How do you know he did? The steward told you. He scared Herbert with his yarns and got him out of the way and then made up that lie to explain why he left."

"But how about my seeing it?" I asked.

"You didn't; just dreaming, or else it was the steward tricked up to do you."

"Well, I hope so," I said.

"Don't you get worried, my boy. If it's man, ghost or devil, I'll have him out of that schooner or my name is not George."

All this talk was reassuring, but yet I could not get out of my mind the appearance or whatever you like to call that I had seen across the cabin.

The next day we shipped the owner and his two friends, a Mr. Adby and a Mr. Gail; they were both Western men and had something to do with railroads, in which Caldwell was interested. We got underway and then had a talk over the cruise, and as Brooks knew all the Maine coast, having been stationed at Portland, we decided on a cruise down that way.

Brooks took the master's berth, Mr. Caldwell the big room, the other two went into the forward room and I kept mine. That evening we

anchored in Holmes Hole, and all hands aft turned in about eleven. The next morning after getting underway Brooks began to guy me about *the thing*, as he called it, not being seen.

"I told you, my boy, it went overside with that scoundrel of a steward," he said; and I began to think so, too.

We had a fine run over the Shoals with a strong Sou'wester and that night got into Provincetown about eight o'clock. All hands being tired turned in early. The next morning at breakfast, Mr. Adby, a sort of quiet kind of a chap, looked up from his plate across at the Captain and said:

"Captain, I don't know much about the customs of the sea, but is it usual for one of the men to come into the cabin here and make himself at home after all are in bed?"

I felt my heart give a jump up into my throat at these words and gave Brooks a quick look.

"One of the men, Mr. Adby," replied Brooks, after a pause, "nobody comes in here but the steward unless he is sent." And then he turned the conversation by asking me something about the yacht's sails.

When we were on deck getting underway Mr.

Adby came up to me as I was leaning over coiling down some of the topsail gear.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I made some kind of break at the table this morning, when I asked Captain Brooks about that man being in the cabin. I saw your look."

"Not at all," I replied, without raising my face.

"I didn't mean to give anything away," he went on.

Straightening up I looked him square in the face. "Look here," I said, "you are a man with some nerve, aren't you?"

"I have that reputation," he answered.

"Well, then, just as soon as we get started just come quietly down into my room; I want to speak with you."

After getting clear of Race Point I went below and Adby followed. Shutting the door I motioned him to a seat, and taking a perch on the edge of the bunk, said:

"Now tell me all about it."

"I don't want to get anybody into trouble," he began.

"You won't," I said.

"Well, then, last night I woke up thirsty and

went into the cabin to get a drink from the water bottle in the rack. After drinking I put the glass and bottle back and stooped over the table to have a look at a newspaper that was lying on it, something having caught my eye. I probably read for two or three minutes when I heard somebody come into the cabin. I looked up and a man passed me and went and took a look at the clock. He stood looking at it for a minute, then he turned round and went to a closet over there, opened it, took out some papers and sat down at the head of the table. There was something strange about his looks and—well, I tried to speak to him, but I couldn't force a word out of my mouth. I never felt so queer in all my life."

"How was he dressed?" I asked excitedly.

"All in white; he had a white loose shirt open in the front and white trousers." Then he went on, "I didn't know what to do, so went on reading, trying to watch him out of the corner of my eye. Suddenly I looked and he was gone."

"Have you seen any one on board that looks at all like him?" I asked.

"No; but I thought it might be one of the crew whom I hadn't noticed."

Then I told him the whole story and requested him to keep quiet. After lunch I had Brooks down to look over a chart and then had Adby go over his part of the story again. When he was through Brooks whistled and then sat thinking for some time.

Then he asked, "Will you and Mr. Adby stand watch here to-night?"

We both consented.

Between twelve and one that night we were off Thatchers Island with a light offshore breeze. Brooks was on deck and Mr. Adby and I were in the saloon playing cribbage, the rest had turned in. Suddenly Brooks came down the companion stairs and staggered up to the table. His face was white as a sheet and he shook like a leaf, as they say.

"For God's sake, give me some brandy!" he exclaimed.

Adby grabbed the decanter and poured out a drink, and Brooks, dropping into a chair, swallowed it. Both of us stood over him waiting until he spoke.

"My God," he said, "what is it?"

Then recovering his man he told us what had happened.

"I shifted the hood of the binnacle round so as to get the bearings of the light, and in getting it back straight jarred one of the lamps out. So I took the wheel from the man and told him to take it forward, prick up the wick, and relight it. While he was gone I was looking up into the sail trying to see how near she would go with her sheets as we had them, when I felt somebody behind me. Thinking it was the man come back I was just going to give him the wheel and tell him to put her back on the course, when a strange voice said, 'Go below, go below, he's murdered the Captain.' I turned sharp round and there stood a man dressed in white. I don't know what I did next until I got down here."

"Let's go on deck," I said, and jumped up the stairs, they following. We found the man at the wheel trying to get the schooner back on her course, she being up in the wind.

"Did you find anybody at the wheel when you came aft?" I asked him.

"No, sir, I left the Captain here; he was gone when I came aft with the lamp, sir."

"See anybody on deck?"

"Only the lookout, sir, for'ard."

I went forward and questioned the lookout. He had seen nobody but the helmsman who went below to relight the lamp.

After some few words we all three decided to remain on deck. Brooks was completely knocked over, and swore he never would stay anywhere on that vessel alone again.

The next morning, after a consultation, we decided to tell the owner all and ask his opinion as to what was best to do. I told my story first, then Mr. Adby his, and Brooks followed.

The owner listened attentively and then paced up and down the cabin for a few minutes thinking; at last he sat down opposite to us and said: "Gentlemen, strange as it is, I believe every word of what you have told me. But before we decide on anything, let us search the yacht. Is there any place where a man could hide?"

"Not many," said Brooks, "but I'll have a thorough search."

"Better wait until we get into harbor so as not to alarm the men."

We made Portland that evening and anchored, and Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Gail went ashore to stay. Brooks, Adby and myself determined to

brave it out. Nothing happened. The next morning we got the crew to work and searched her from stem to stern. Had all the sails out, routed down in the bilges and over the ballast but found nothing. Then we went ashore, met the owner and had it out.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Caldwell after we had told of our search, "I believe you are brave men and not to be frightened by anything living, but I cannot ask you or any man to face such a thing, nor do I want to face it myself. I am sorry to have to break up our cruise, and more sorry to lose your society, but if we cannot get another yacht to continue in I am going to give the trip up. You," he continued, turning to me, "and the Captain can see if you can find and charter another yacht here; if not, we will have to part."

"What shall we do with Loiterer?" I asked.

"Do anything you can with her; sell her; if not, burn her up."

"Then you believe that she is haunted?" said Mr. Gail, who on hearing our tales had been a bit skeptical.

Mr. Caldwell looked at him for a moment and then in his quiet way said: "Believe she is haunted? I know it. That man came into my

room and spoke to me. But now no more of it. What will you gentlemen have to drink?"

* * *

When the Commodore stopped all hands sat for some minutes looking into the fire, then young Treport asked, "What became of the yacht, Commodore?"

"I sold her to a fisherman for \$1,800. She made two or three trips to the banks and was lost, so I heard."

"Commodore," said Stayfast, after stretching out his legs and yawning, "you ought to apply for a medal. I'm only in the second class after that. Do you know that until you added that postscript about selling the yacht for \$1,800, I believed every word of the yarn. But I've been berthed with you too long ever to believe you made any such break as that. Why, a haunted yacht, she'd have been worth \$20,000 a year just to exhibit. Why, you could have hauled her into a slip and charged fifty a head to see her and hear the thrilling details from your own lips. You never let a snap like that go by."

"Oh, shut up talking rot, Jack," said the Commodore. "I never expected you would believe it, but I tell you, man, if you had been there

you'd have been the first to get out of that craft. I wouldn't have stopped one night aboard of her alone for all the schooners afloat,"

"Perhaps not sober," continued Stayfast, "but——"

"No buts about it. You wait till you cross hawse with a real ghost."

"I hope to some day, but so far they've dodged me; but I had a friend once that saw five of them at one sitting."

"Now you're giving lee-gauge, Jack," said Bossington.

"No, I am not, Bossy; I'm holding right on to my wind. I said I never saw a spook and that's truth and I don't believe, admit or even surmise that there is such a thing either afloat or ashore. But a man is not responsible for what his friends see any more than he is for the bad cooking of his wife."

"I don't know about that," put in the Commadore. "Some are responsible, as they encourage 'em to keep at it by eatin' what they cook. Well, go on with your yarn."

"Not to-night, boys, it's getting late and I promised to be in before one."

"One be hanged; go on, let's have the yarn and I'll order the drinks," said Bossington.

"Well, if you insist, but, mind you, I relate the story under protest, and do not in any way vouch for its truth."

"That is totally unnecessary," said the Commodore.



NIGHT ONE—"I never felt so queer in all my life."

STAYFAST'S YARN

Twenty years ago when I joined the Leaky Bay Yacht Club that celebrated organization was at the zenith of its prosperity and a model club in every matter and form. It had one hundred and seventeen members and three boats that could float. These were kept moored off the house so as to make things look nautical, and as a place of refuge when the shore abode got too hot to hold some of the more advanced and skilful of the members. There would have been only one boat, if it hadn't been that the constitution obliged the flag-officers to be yacht owners, and as we had to have three Commodores by the powers of the same instrument we had to have three boats. There was a big list of yachts printed in the back of the club-book, but most of these hung on the walls in frames and some in wood, until fuel got high priced and we used them to keep the fire going.

When I joined, William Packhazard Boggs was Commodore, and had been three years. He first came into prominence, so I heard, at the an-

nual meeting by suggesting an amendment to Article I of the Constitution which, as you know, always reads something like this: "The objects of this club are to encourage yacht building, racing and sailing." Boggs got up and moved the amendment by striking out that part of the paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following: "to encourage *drinking, gambling and general h—l raising.*" That made him Commodore.

He was a Napoleon of drinkers and no living man, or dead either, as you shall hear, ever put him under the table. He used to get just so and there he stood pat; and he could keep right along to a certain point of saturation like a sponge in a dinkey's bilge. The only unyachting thing he was addicted to was a practice of sleeping nights on his boat; a practice for which some of the members tried to impeach him, but failed, owing to his having got all hands three sheets in the wind before the meeting was called to order.

Commodore Boggs—Tred remembers him—was a short, full-bilged, square-sided cuss, with a head bigger at the top than at the bottom, and a pair of large feet that were always breaking

tacks with each other. He had a voice like the hooter in a Fall River boat, and a laugh that started down somewhere in the big intestine and rolled up and out like a clap of Jersey thunder.

Well, to get along, the night he was ashore raising hookey with the top-notch crowd and having silenced all their guns he started to go aboard his packet. It was blowing a pretty stiff breeze of wind, Northeast, and raining a bit now and then. Getting down to the float he hailed the Blackjack, but the crew had gone to sleep with the hatch on and didn't hear him, so after thundering away for a few minutes, he cussed and taking a dinkey lying at the float started to row out. Somehow or other he missed the yacht and blew out into the bay. Finding he was on the wrong tack he wore round and tried to work in home, but the wind was too much and he went stern-first for the broad and open waters.

How long he rowed I don't know, but he used to say it was three hours, when suddenly a big white sloop ran over the boat. As she struck the dinkey the Commodore grabbed the bobstay and with the desperation of a man working for his life swung himself upon the bowsprit and

crawled in over the bows. When he got straightened up and had hold of some of the gear abreast of the mast, a man came up to him. Boggs was just about to give the fellow the devil for running him down, when the man said, saluting: "Commodore, the gentlemen are waiting for you; will you please step below?" This kind of threw the Commodore up in the wind and he followed the sailor aft without a word. Here his guide motioned him to step down into the cabin which was brilliantly lighted. Boggs did.

As soon as his eyes got used to the light he saw seated at a table that ran the length of the cabin five figures, dressed in Commodores' uniforms and having their caps on. One at the fore end of the table and two on either side, there being a vacant chair at the after end and a big bowl of steaming liquor in the middle. As he entered the five figures rose and, removing their caps, saluted him. Then he noticed that not one of the five had a single hair or piece of flesh on his head, showing nothing but bare white skulls. This for a moment kind of gave the Commodore a knockdown, but he filled in, luffed up, and faced the meeting like a man.

"Welcome, Commodore," exclaimed the five,

lifting to their fleshless lips a glass of hot punch. "To your health, sir," said the one at the end of the table and the rest repeated the toast, and all were about to drink when Boggs, getting a whiff of the liquor, shouted, "Hold on, boys, I'm with you," and seizing and filling a glass, drank it off. Then the five sat down.

The Commodore, a bit out of breath by his late exertions and the unusual warmth of his reception, paused for a moment and then said: "Gentlemen, I am delighted to meet you; it is indeed an unexpected pleasure to be shipwrecked into so pleasant a company of men of my own rank in the nautical world; as you all seem to know me without the formality of an introduction, I propose that we dispense with the ceremony and proceed to business, as I am devilish thirsty after my long row, so seeing, I beg to propose the health of Commodore Bones at the head of the table."

Then the skeleton on the right proposed the Leaky Bay Yacht Club and Boggs returned by proposing his health under the nom-de-os of Commodore Spareribs, and they drank to the sport and to all flag-officers dead and living. Toast after toast was proposed, but despite the

best the five defunct could do Boggs kept his seat and filled and emptied his glass every time. Subjects for toasts having been exhausted, Commodore Boggs proposed that he sing a song and that after every verse they have a drink. This song, so Boggs said, consisted of 999 verses.

This settled four of the skeleton commodores, first to port and then to starboard they collapsed and slid down under the table with a hollow rattle of well-dried bones, leaving only his vis-a-vis, Commodore Bones, to be dealt with.

"Well, old Dogsbreakfast," said Boggs as he paused to get wind for the 779th verse, "it seems you and me are left alone in our glory to fight this thing out. How do you feel?"

The bony phantom made an effort to reply, but the only sound was a hollow gurgle and a faint rasping of the scapulas as they rubbed over the cervical processes.

"Two more," said Boggs to himself, "and I've got him. I'm pretty nearly bilged myself. They had a big advantage, too, seeing as how they cannot hold the stuff, being nothing but slats. But here goes."

Sure enough the last Commodore's ghost rattled down under the table and Boggs stood

alone victor of the field. He rose to his feet, gave one resounding yell of triumph and went to join the fallen.

The next morning the crew of a market sloop saw a boat afloat and coming up caught and hauled it alongside with a boat hook. A pair of legs were hanging over the stern and in the bottom calmly sleeping was the Commodore, his head resting against the rowing thwart.

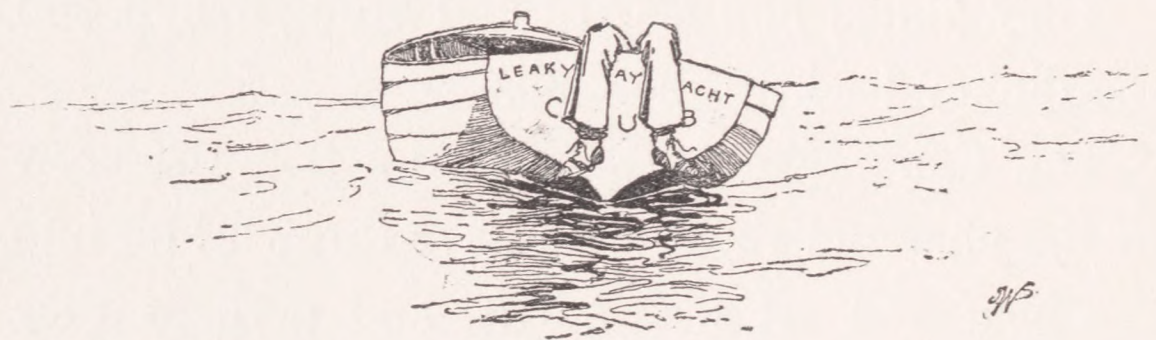
They pulled him aboard and brought him and the dinkey back to the club.

The Commodore always swore that the crew of the phantom yacht must have thrown him into the boat and set him adrift, and perhaps they did.

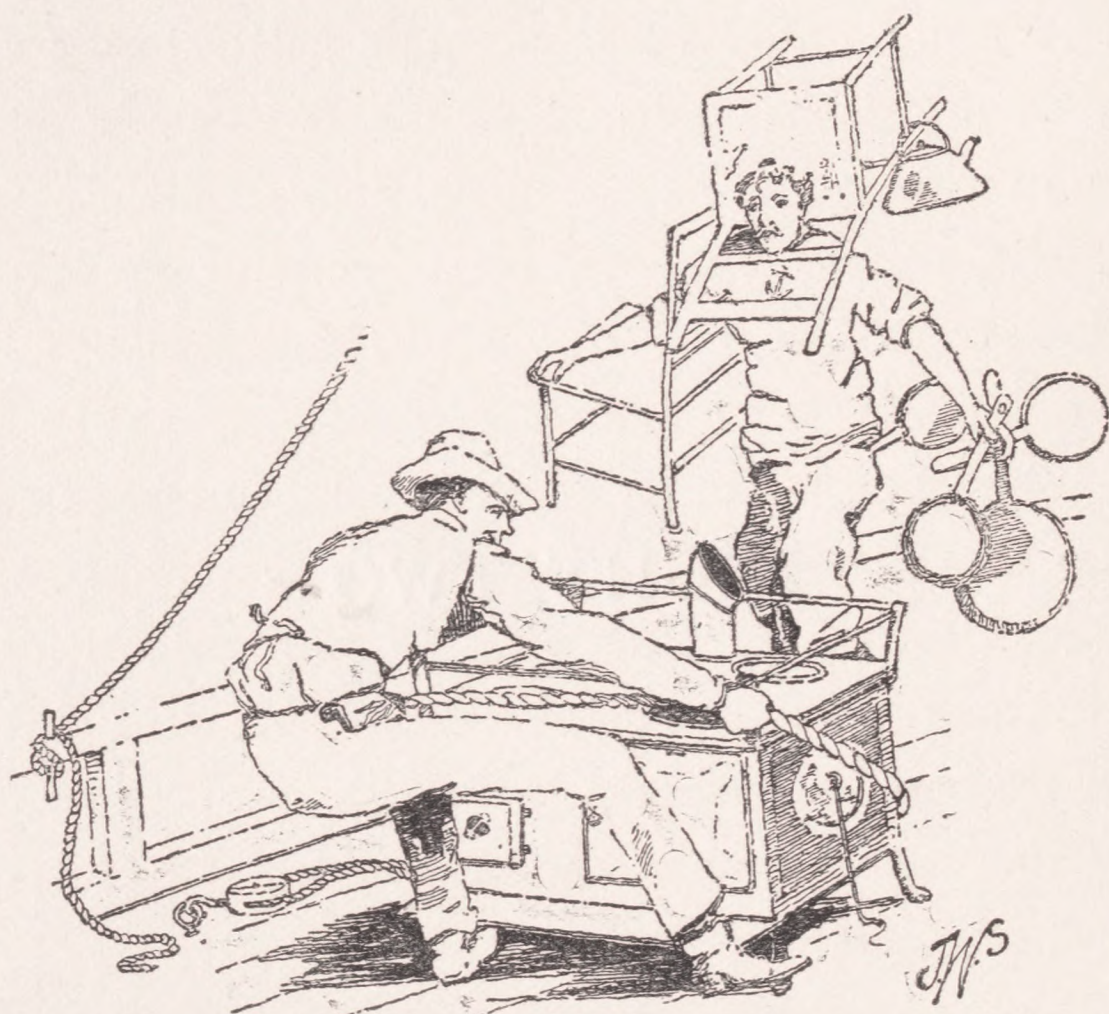
* * *

"You don't mean to say there's any truth in that yarn, do you, Jack?" said Bossington, as they rose to go.

"Not a word of it, Bossy, not a word; but it's a better story than either Treport's or the Commodore's, and that's something to recommend it."



NIGHT TWO



NIGHT TWO—"Anything! anything! everything!"
shouted the old man.

NIGHT TWO

"WHERE'S Stayfast to-night?" asked Treport, as he drew his chair up to the fire beside the Commodore.

"Not turned up yet. He's been up to City Island to look at his boat; he's having it rebuilt," answered the Commodore.

"She's not worth it, is she?" said Bossington, who was standing with his back to the chimney-piece, clearing his pipe with a broom straw.

"Worth it, no; but he would not part with that old trap for her weight in gold."

"She was quite a crack once, wasn't she, Commodore?" asked Treport.

"Yes, years ago when he first bought her. I sailed a good many races in the Old Horsecar, as we used to call her, and won 'em, too.

"Stayfast was a great hand for carrying sail, and it's a wonder he never upset the old box. He came very near it several times. Her rig has been cut down considerable in late years and now he's going to get into the fashion by striking his topmast and giving her a pole. The next

you hear he'll have an engine in her. Times have changed;" and after this remark the Commodore sat silently gazing into the fire for some moments, lost in deep thought. Treport filled and lighted his pipe and sat down beside him.



THE COMMODORE'S STORY

Some time in the fifties, there was an old fellow by the name of Waterbury Peet, or, as he was familiarly called, Waterbug Peet, who belonged to a club that harbored down on the Harlem River. He was a good soul, a kind friend and a poor enemy, if he ever had any enemy in his life, which I doubt. He was always about the water sailing or at the clubhouse, and put up more money for prizes and club wants than any other two men in the organization.

Like Stayfast, he had an old sloop that he stuck to like a barnacle to a rock, and that he fully believed to be the finest-modeled vessel afloat. He used to stick her into every race, but she had no more show of winning than a lame cart horse would if run against a drive of first-class racers. The boys used to try to persuade him to sell her and buy a new boat, but it was no use; he stuck to her like a man to his first love. Two or three times they tried to throw him a race, but it was no use, it seemed as though she couldn't win; not even a walk over.

Well, one race I went with him, and the old man was all excited and, from his talk, crack sure of getting first, although we had four smart boats in the class against us. We all jollied him along and promised to do our best, and we did.

In those days we used to start the boats from the main channel over against the Harlem Flats shore and sail through the Gate up the river to and around the buoy of Throgs Point. Of course, we had to go and come with the tide. That was before, mind you, the reefs were blown out of the Gate, and it was a Hell Gate for certain.

It was a time start, no one-gun, in those days, ten minutes to get over the line. We started just on the last ebb, and all the fleet excepting our old packet got over, and with a light Northerly air stood over under Wards Island to get into the slack water.

They did, and got becalmed there and drifted about in circles. Try our best we couldn't get enough way on Eliza to get her across the line until some five minutes after the gun, then she drifted over stern first and started down the river. Old Waterbug was at the wheel and at-

tending to business, but the helm was about as much use as a tail is to a dead dog.

We drifted down until we got past Mill Rock, and then slewed off over toward the end of Blackwells Island; here by some chance we got into an eddy which took us into the first of the flood making up toward Flood Rock, and pretty soon we were going all a-fluking upstream. The old man laid her broadsides to it and this gave the sloop enough way to steer, and off we sailed.

The rest of the bunch were still becalmed in the slack water under the Island, and as we passed round the bend we waved them a good-by. Old Waterbug was all excited but he pushed it down and kept to his work. Off Woolseys Point we caught the first of a Southerly wind coming out of Bowery Bay, and Eliza took a heel and away she went.

When we rounded the mark, the fleet was almost out of sight behind us. The home leg was a reach as far as the Brothers, and we went through the bunch off Old Ferry Point. All hands cheered the old man as they passed and shouted more or less ironical words of encouragement. Off Baretos Point the tide got pretty strong and Eliza began to check up, but Old

Waterbug knew every eddy, and we began to work 'em, going in among the rocks and skinning the points so as to keep out of the worst of the current. But it was slow moving and the best of the fleet began to gain on us rapidly. It was just at this time that I made the overhasty remark that the old tub was overloaded, and if she could be lightened up we might win.

The old man grasped the suggestion with a rush.

"Cut away both anchors, boys," he yelled. "I'm going to win at any price."

So we cut and let 'em go. Anchors in those days were heavy bits of furniture, and it lightened her up forward considerably.

"She's doing better," we yelled.

"Go below and heave out the stuff forward," was the next command.

"What stuff?" said I.

"Anything! anything! everything!" shouted the old man, jumping up and down at the wheel.

This was fun for us. Down we went, overboard went the stove, all the pans and kettles, a breaker of water, and other dunnage. When this was done we came aft again.

"That'll do," said the old man; but just then he spied the box of bottled stuff we had to drink.

"Over with that," he shouted.

To this order the whole crew objected; we offered to drink and throw the bottles over.

"No, no, over with it, I'll buy you more," he yelled; so over it went.

The fleet continued to gain despite the sacrifice, so we began to chuck the ballast, and by the time the tide slacked and we got through the Gate, Eliza was as empty as a tin buoy. But we crossed the line just in time, with Staghound's bowsprit over our taffrail and another boat not fifty feet astern.

I never saw anybody so elated as the old man; he jumped, laughed, sang and cried. Everybody but the crew of Staghound cheered him, and were delighted that he'd made a first finish at last. Staghound's owner, a mean sort of a chap, put in a protest, but several of the boys took him out behind the spar shed and laid down the common law to him. They told him how the old man had given for years in his open-handed way, how he tried to win, and taken defeat after defeat like a sport, and said that even if he had broken the rules he deserved to have this one

race as a reward for his perseverance and pluck, and ended up by telling Staghound's owner that if he persisted in pushing the protest they would make earth, air and water too hot to hold his carcass for the next twenty-four hours.

The boys were kind of vehement about it because they knew that if Old Waterbug was awarded the race, he would open up everything as wide as the hinges, whereas the Staghound man would buy himself and crew a drink and then go home. Well, it ended by the Staghound man withdrawing his protest, and Eliza got her prize. It was the longest and liveliest night the club ever saw.

* * *

"Here's Jack now," said Treport, as Stay-fast's voice was heard outside. Soon the gentleman came blowing in through the door.

"House of Lords in session," he said, as he shifted his coat and made for a chair by the fire. "Whose trick is it?"

"Yours," said Treport. "Commodore's just spun his wheel."

"Not much, boys; I'm going to take a rest. My brain needs it. I'm completely knocked end-wise."

"Why, what's up?" asked Bossington.

"Nothing; that's just what's the trouble. I went there expecting to find everything up, and they are still at the frame. Such a job we had; took out every blame timber but two. There won't be much more than a smell of the old boat left when we are finished. New bow, new stern, new midships; but it's going to improve her speed if it doesn't spoil her beauty. I'll tell you all, I'll be right up in front of the bunch next Summer. What say you, gentle friend Tred?"

"Don't believe in it. If I got married the second time, I'd want a new wife and new clothes. What you're doing is like rigging out the new in the old one's duds. Never saw a rebuilt boat that was worth a handful of clam shells."

"Well, that is a silly comparison. What similarity is there between remarriage and rebuilding, I'd like to know."

"Both acts of a fool," said the Commodore. "But own up yourself, Jack, did you ever know a rebuilt boat to be worth anything?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"When and where?"

"Trap," said Stayfast, "and I don't fall in it. I told you I wouldn't yarn to-night."

"Oh, come on, Jack," prompted Treport.

"Well, just hang up the card 'By Request,' and give me a cigar, and I'll tell you of a rebuilt boat that was a success; and what's more, there were two of them."



STAYFAST'S YARN

Did you ever hear of a sandbagger that used to be knocking about here called Substance? She was built by Willis over in Cow Bay, and was the smartest thing that ever took gravel to keep upon her legs. Her owner was a sporting gent named Calworthy, who lived down on the back side of Pelham Neck. He raced her for years against all comers for from \$500 to \$1,000 a race, and she never was fairly beaten. I guess as many as thirty boats were built purposely to beat her, but it was no go; she did 'em all. When she wasn't racing, the old man used to keep her locked up in a barn on his place, and never would let anybody go near her unless he was along.

After a while she got kindy shaky and, after a talk with a boat-builder, old Calworthy decided to rebuild the boat. The builder was a fellow by name of Hawkins, or Grumpy Sam as he was called, to distinguish him from his only son, another Sam, who was known as Jolly Sam, for the stump-ended reason that he was more sour-faced and meaner than his cranky dad.

Early in the Fall they started at the job, the

two Hawkinses doing the work and Calworthy overseeing it. They were very tender about the dissection and no two better workmen than Sam and his son ever handled tools. They carefully took off the plank and then one by one took the frames out, moulded a new one from the old and put it in. By this means they exactly duplicated the boat, so that when she was replanked you couldn't tell her from herself that had been.

When they got through with the job, young Sam asked Calworthy if he could have the old stuff for firewood, and he gave it to him, so Jolly Sam carted it off. The next Spring Calworthy was out looking for blood, but nothing came along until some time in June, when he had a challenge from a man up somewhere in Connecticut offering to match his sloop against Substance for \$1,000 a side.

They met and arranged the race to come off in a week, best two out of three. The name of the challenging boat was Shadow. Well, the morning of the race Calworthy sent his boat around here all up in fine shape with a crew of ten rigged out in red shirts, and fifty bags for ballast, and he drove over in his team. When he got down to the dock he saw the sloop lying

along the float, and went down to have a word with his skipper. There was one man in the boat.

"Where's Bill?" says Calworthy.

Bill was the skipper's name.

"Darned if I know," says the fellow. "Bill who?"

"Bill Smith, my skipper," says the old man, kind of irritated.

"How in h—l should I know," says the fellow; then he added, with a grin, "This ain't your boat."

"Not my boat?"

"No," says the fellow; "there's your boat off there," and he pointed to Substance just coming round the point.

Old Calworthy looked first at one and then at the other, then he slapped his thigh and says, "Well, I'll be d——d."

The two boats were exactly alike, you couldn't tell them apart for money; and when they measured 'em up, they both came out exactly the same, twenty-seven feet, two and three-quarter inches.

Calworthy was too good a sport to say anything, and they started the boats. The race was

ten miles to windward and back, and you can guess it was a pretty one.

They went down the wind together, turned the stake together, and all the way up the wind stuck as close to each other as two love-birds on a perch; about a quarter of a mile from the finish they split tacks trying to break apart, and finished on different boards, but despite all the skippers could do they made a dead heat of it—Substance on the port and Shadow on the starboard, crossing exactly at the same second. Of course, this bred a row, both crews got drunk and fought it out ashore. The fight was a draw.

They sailed the other two races with the same result, both dead heats; and then Old Calworthy and the owner of Shadow had a row, and the former accused the latter of stealing the model of his boat, and pulled out of the challenge.

After a time the insides of the thing came out. It seems that young Sam took the old frame up home and then, thinking there might be something in it, was foxy enough to hunt up the Connecticut fellow and put up the job between them of building a boat over the old timbers and challenging Substance.

* * *

"Which all goes to prove that rebuilt boats are some good after all, eh, Tred?"

"In yarns, yes," said the Commodore. "When did you manufacture that, coming down on the train?"

"Now, look here, Tred, I never question either your veracity or your memory, and want you to respect mine. I didn't insist upon telling that story, did I?"

"No, you didn't."

"Well, then, don't look at the label on a bottled present."

"But, really, wasn't there any difference between those boats?" asked Bossington. "There surely must have been some."

"No, Bossy, not a diff. We weighed 'em on the scales and they weighed within two ounces of each other, that difference probably being due to the more lavish use of paint on one of them. Probably a slip of the brush."



NIGHT TWO—*Calworthy, owner of Substance.*

TREPORT'S STORY

Talking about sandbaggers, a funny thing happened to me once when sailing one. I owned a 20-footer called Huhu. It was the second boat I ever had, and I was at that time green, quite green, but thought I was a great sailor and that my craft was fast. This idea made me get into every race that came within twenty miles of me. I never won anything, but learned a lot that has been valuable to me since. One day I had her enlisted for a race, but two of my crew did not show up, leaving me short-handed. We waited at the float until the last minute, but nobody came; at last just as we were going to shove off, Lunt Smith came running down with a husky-looking chap in tow, whom he shouted was a good hand and willing to go along. The fellow jumped aboard and took the main-sheet in a way that looked like knowing his business, so I left him there.

We got to the line just as the gun exploded and over we went. It was blowing a ripping Nor'wester, and getting harder the further we

ran off land. There were four of us in a bunch with our booms broad off, and all we could stagger under. Skoog was on my weather bow, Yado on my lee quarter, and another boat whose name I don't remember close behind. This put me in a bad box when we got down near the mark, as we had to gybe round it.

My only chance was to let Skoog get ahead enough, so I could gybe under her stern, so I yelled to take in the main-sheet. I was busy with the helm trying to keep clear of the other boats for a second or two, then looked round and not a move was the sheet-man making.

"Come aft with that sheet!" I yelled.

Not a move.

Before I could utter another syllable we were at the mark and, in order to prevent the boom fouling it, had to gybe all standing. Bang! over went the sail and over went the boat.

When I got up on the side and had rinsed the water out of my eyes and mouth, I looked for the main-sheet man. He was sitting serenely beside me, nothing wet but his feet. I opened on him, I shouted at him, yelled at him, called him every kind of a fool, cursed him until I was breathless, then the crew took an inning, and

gave him ballyhoo. We were all three mad clear to the roots of our hair.

What riled us most was that he never answered back or attempted in any way to explain himself. Any man might feel bad enough to keep silent after capsizing a boat, but under a fire of such language it was inhuman. At last we got tired of cursing and reviling him and shut up, all hands hanging on in glum silence.

Pretty soon Lunt came up in his sloop and picked us off. When we got straightened out and Huhu in tow, he asked me how it happened.

"Why," said I, "that darn fool you put aboard let her gybe with the main-sheet way off. I yelled to him two minutes before we got to the mark to trim it down, and the darn idiot never pulled in a foot."

At this Lunt began to roar; this made me mad and I yelled at him:

"What are you laughing at, you blamed old fool?"

"Hollered to him, did yer? Blamed if that ain't a good one! Why, he's deaf and dumb."

* * *

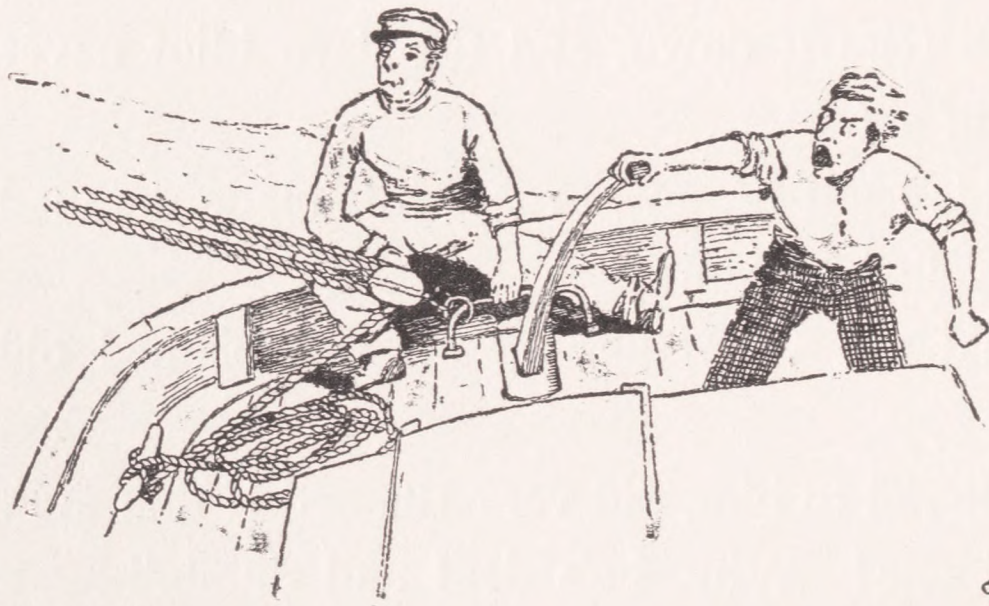
"Well, so will I be if I stay here much longer, boys; so home for me," said Stayfast, getting up.

"When's the next meeting, Jack?" inquired Bossington.

"Don't know, Bossy; depends on how the wind blows. Just now it is decidedly East with me."

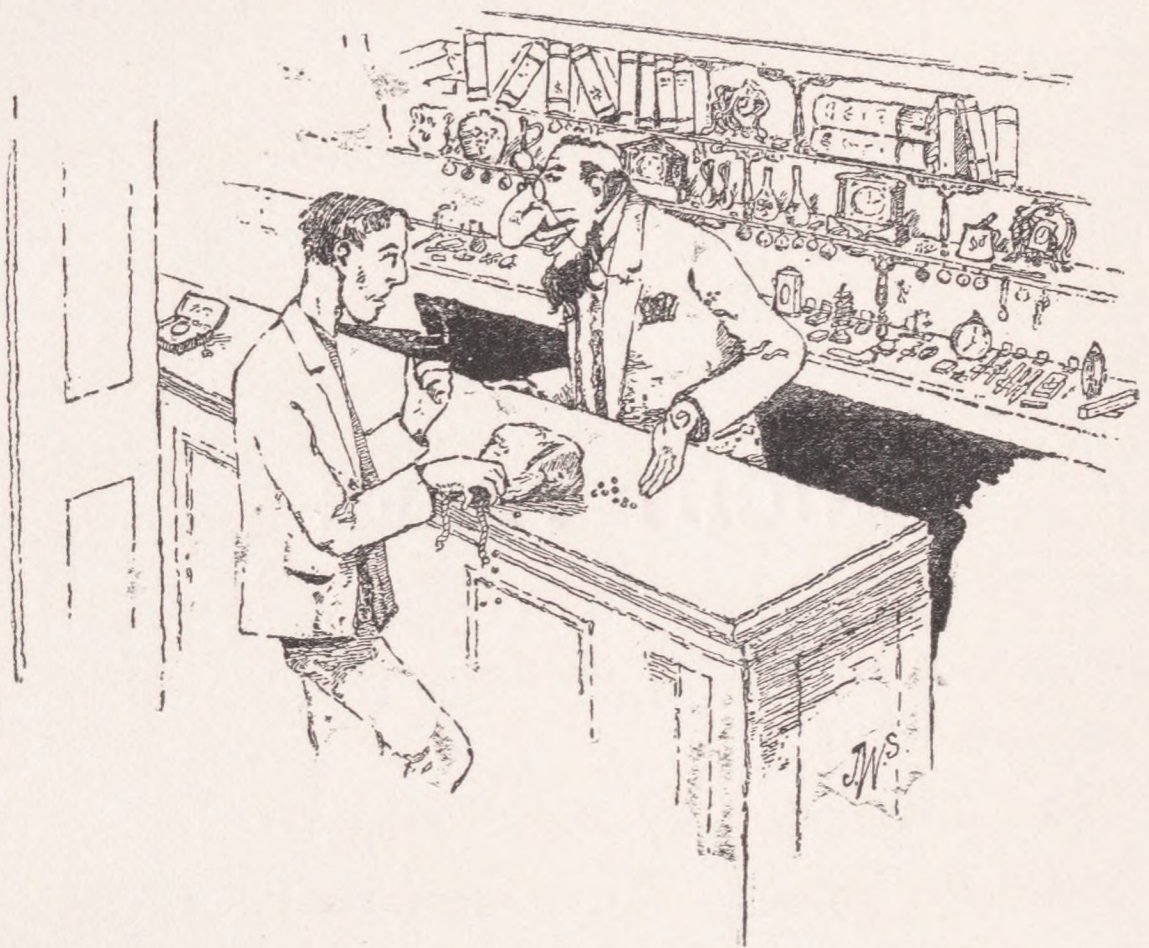
"What do the doctors say, Jack?" asked Treport.

"Same old thing: must give up tobacco and rum, go to bed early, and get up late, not read the newspapers or eat cabbage. Pretty soon they'll tell me not to think. But I'll be down here the first of the month sure. So good-night to you, boys."

*M.S.*

NIGHT TWO—"Come aft with that sheet."

NIGHT THREE



NIGHT THREE—"They're all spiled."

NIGHT THREE

"I AM as bilious as an oyster," remarked Stay-fast, as he sat down between Bossington and Treport.

"I never knew oysters suffered from that complaint," said Bossington.

"You didn't, Bossy? Well, let me tell you that you are decidedly weak in your natural history. If you'd made a study of these things as I have you would know that for its size the oyster has the largest liver of any living creature, and what's more to the point it's always out of order."

"How about clams?" asked Treport.

"Different again. Their weak point is the heart; the clam suffers from vulvular enlargement of that organ."

"Then I suppose the expression, 'don't be a clam' really means 'don't have a big heart,'" suggested Treport.

"Right you are, boy; but as Bill Van Dam used to say 'some oysters knows more than them that catches 'em thinks they do,' and Bill ought

to have known, for he'd drudged thousands of bushels in his day."

"Who was Bill Van Dam, Jack?" asked Bossington.

"Bill Van Dam was a living exemplification of the fallacy of veracity. He was the smartest oysterman and the biggest liar that ever sailed the Sound. I knew him for years and have had many a day's sport with him. He was a great hand for finding new beds, and working them on the quiet. I remember one time he found a fat pocket and raked half a dozen loads out of it before the rest of the crowd caught on. He used to go out at night and come back to anchor before daylight, but at last somebody spotted him coming in and they determined to follow and find out where his new-found lode was. So one dark night Bill made sail and two sloops followed him, but Van Dam saw them and instead of going to the bed, stood over to a place he knew to be full of rocks, and there he chucks over his drudge and pretends to drag, but never goes to the bottom at all. The fellows in the other sloops get the bearing of the spot and go home. The next night out they went and begin drudgin' and both of them lose their gear, and never get

a darned oyster. They kept still for a couple of days, then one of 'em comes up to Bill and says:

"Say, Bill, what was yer drudgin' fer off the Old Hen t'other night?"

"How'd you know I was a-drudgin' out there?" asks Van Dam.

"Me and Ef Smith seen yer," says the fellow.

"The h—l yer did!" says Bill; then he takes the fellow one side and says, "Yer won't tell no one, will yer, if I tell yer?" The fellow promised.

"Well, then, I'll tell yer; I was drudgin' fer fallin' stars."

"Fallin' stars!" says the fellow.

"Yes," says Bill, "fallin' stars; I seen two of 'em drop into the water off there, and I made sure I could get 'em."

"And did ye, Bill?"

"Certainly," says Bill, "a male and female; and I've sold 'em to Barnum, the showman, for five hundred dollars apiece."

* * *

"Do you suppose they were meteorites he found?" asked Bossington.

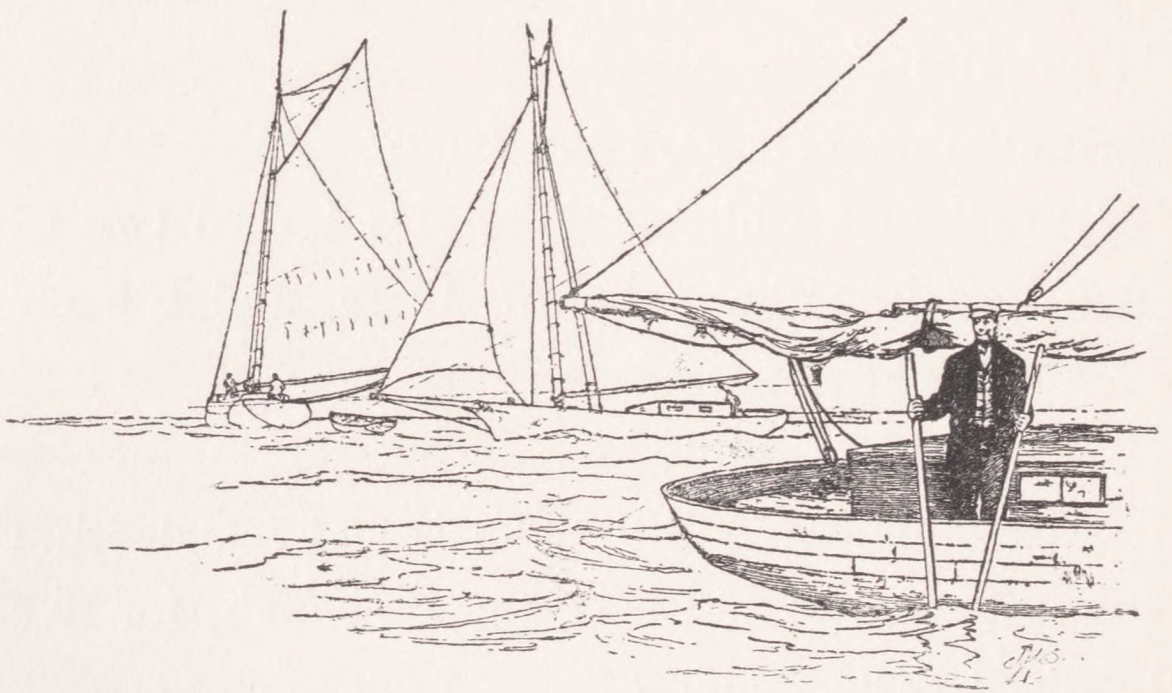
"No, Bossy, they were real, genuine stars that

had dropped out of the constellation of the Lyre."

"Wasn't Bill the oysterman that sailed the devil across the Sound, Jack?" asked Treport.

"So I've heard tell, but if you know the yarn, why, spin it."

"I don't," said Treport; "but I've heard he did. How was it?"



STAYFAST'S YARN

Well, it was way back in the war times, and Bill was mixed up in some underhand jobs that had something to do with deserting and bounty-jumping. There were recruiting stations on Davids and Harts Islands, and thousands of soldiers used to be stationed there waiting to be drafted to the front. Lots of them got away and the boatmen used to run them ashore, getting fifty and a hundred dollars a head for the job. It seems Bill's house was a kind of hiding-hole for these deserters, where they used to lie snug until they could get back to New York or wherever they wanted to go. Men were getting big bounties in those days for enlisting and substituting. I know one man who paid \$1,000 for a substitute, and the fellow deserted but was caught and shot. Van Dam himself got a bullet through his wrist while pulling a boat away from Davids Island with a deserter in it.

But to the yarn: One night in the Fall of the year when it was blowing and sleeting, Bill was waked up by somebody hammering on his door.

Thinking it was a deserter wanting shelter, his son having been out on that business, Van Dam got up and went down to the door. Opening on the crack he looked out and found a tall man standing on the step with a big black sack beside him.

"Are you Bill Van Dam?" asked the stranger, before Bill could say a word.

"That's my name," says Bill. "Won't yer come in?"

"No," says the stranger. "I'm in a great hurry to get across the Sound. Will you take me?"

"Not to-night," says Bill. "'Tain't fit fer no boat to be out to-night."

"I'm the best judge of that," says the stranger. "What will you charge?"

"I can't go," says Bill. "Like to 'blige ye, but this here wind is dead ahead."

"Don't let that worry you," says the stranger; "I'll attend to the wind. What will you charge?"

"I won't go," says Bill again, "not fer fifty dollars."

"Yes, you will," says the stranger. "Come!" and he grasped Van Dam by the arm, and pulled him outside the door.

As Bill used to say when telling the story, "I didn't have no more to say; he just made me foller him an' I didn't have no more fight in me than a dead lobster. When we come down to the shore he says:

"Where's yer sloop?"

"Off there," says I, p'intin' to where she was ankered.

"All right," says the stranger; "git into that skift an' row out."

"So we got into the skift an' I took the oars. Well, darn me, ef in two strokes we wasn't alongside Amanda, and I thinks to myself 'she's been a-draggin', it's lucky I come,' but when I looks round I see she's just where I left her day afore yisterday!

"Git yer sail up," says the stranger; an' do yer know I daresn't say nothin' but goes to work to reef her mainsail an' bob the jib.

"Put the whole of it onto her," says the man.

"She won't carry it," says I. Gee, it was a-blowin' an' I know'd pretty well what that sloop would carry.

"That's my consarn," says the stranger. So I hoists the sails an' they was a-slattin' around. "Well," says I, "she'll either upsot or blow them

sails away," but she done neither. As soon as she payed off I hauled her to the wind agin to make a tack, so as to clear the p'int.

"Keep her closer," says the stranger.

"She won't go no nigher," says I.

"That's my consarn," says the stranger.

"All right," says I, and I luffs her right into it. Well, darn me, ef she didn't keep right on agoin' like a steamboat right clean into the wind's eye. Bye and bye I begins to git skeered fust thing she'd fetch up clean into somebody's back lot an' do some smashing things, so I says, "We'd better shorten her down," I says, "she's goin' pretty speedy."

"This ain't no Long Island Railroad," says he, "and darn me ef it wur." Bye and bye, he says, "That'll do," and with that we stops right dead still. I couldn't see no land nor nothin' it was that dark, but I seen my friend right enough; he was all over this here phosphor like a bunch of seaweed when the water's full of that there stuff. Then I knowed just who an' what he were. Darn me ef I wasn't skeered.

"Here's yer pay," says he, shovin' a coin into my hand, "an' while yer keep it, says he, ye'll never want a dollar;" an' then there came a clap

of thunder an' lightnin' an' he was gone. Gee, but how it did smell of burnt matches! But just as he went a puff struck the sloop an' she heeled right to the cabin-house an' took a shoot, and before I could holler Jerusalem, was up high and dry on the beach.

"The next mornin' I looked for the coin he gave me an' found it. It was a silver dollar an' looked all good, so I goes ashore, the town being Bridgeport, an' being hungry stops into a place to get something to eat. I was feelin' kind of sore when I got over my skeer at havin' been brought over that far an' not gettin' but a dollar fur my trouble. So I says to h—l with his dollar an' gives it to the man what kept the eatin' place. He looks at it, an' says, 'I ain't seen one of them in a year;' fer all the money was paper then, shinplasters, we called 'em. When I gets back to the sloop an' gets her off an' p'inted fur home, I puts my hand into my pocket to get my knife an' feels a coin; I pulled it out an' darn me if it weren't that there dollar. I spent it, an' it'd come back to me, every time."

When Bill got this far in his story he would always make a long pause until somebody would ask him if he still had the coin.

"Wuss luck, I lost it; at least, my woman did fer me. I left it in my Sunday clothes to hum, an' a peddler come to the house a-sellin' things an' my woman goes up an' gits the dollar an'



NIGHT THREE—*Prayer Book.*

buys something from the peddler an' I never seen it again."

"What did she buy, Bill?"

"A prayer book."

* * *

"It's queer," remarked Treport, after Stayfast

had finished his story, "what a lot of these devil's tales there are knocking about; you hear them everywhere. Most of them seem to run in the same vein, and what seems to me to be silly, because they always restrict his traveling abilities, so that he has to solicit the help of humans to get about."

"Certainly they do," explained Stayfast, "because the minute the devil takes human shape and discards his hoofs and horns he is just as limited in his modes of locomotion as any other animal. He can't fly and walk, and if he can fly he can't swim."

"There's no sense in that argument, Jack," said the Commodore.

"No sense! and pray why not?"

"Because some animals can do all those things. For instance, a duck can fly, swim and walk and dive too."

"Well, suppose it can; who's talking about ducks?"

"Nobody was."

"Yes, you were; you were trying to compare the devil to a duck."

"No, I wasn't; I was just trying to strengthen your argument."

"Strengthen my argument; well, I tell you I know more about the devil and all the rest of his tribe than you ever will so long as you live," said Stayfast.

"Don't doubt it; if anybody should be on a familiar footing with the father of lies you are surely the man."

"Now you're getting personal, Tred; you never can argue without bringing personalities into the talk. I can argue with a man for a week and never have to mention anything of a personal nature. What the deuce makes you so grouchy to-night? Liver out of order?"

"Don't be an ass, Jack."

"Come, come, Stayfast," said Treport, "let's drop the devil and the duck."

"Drop them, certainly; but I'm going home. The Commodore's got an elbow in his hawse and nothing that a man can say seems to please him. Here we are three gentlemen sitting in front of the fire discussing the elevating topic of demonology, discussing it in a gentlemanly, philosophic and quiet manner when he breaks in with some rot about ducks. I'm going home."

"Oh, take another drink," says the Commo-

dore, sticking his hands in his pockets and yawning back in his chair.

"I wasn't addressing my remarks to you."

The Commodore's only reply to this was to give a grunt and a kick at the butt end of one of the logs in the fire.

Then he said after a pause, "I knew Bill Van Dam."

"Did you, Commodore?" said Bossington.

"Yes, years before Jack here did. In fact, I knew him all my life, until he died. I was born in the same town that he lived in over on Long Island. I've heard hundreds of his yarns and if Jack will sit down, and apologize for his late rudeness, I'll tell one of them."

"I will if you will withdraw your remarks about the ducks."

"You ought to, Commodore," put in Treport.
"That was a fowl blow."

"Round of drinks on you, Treport, you know the rule!" said the Commodore.

"With pleasure, if you two will shake hands and make friends."

"Here's my hand, Jack," says the Commodore, offering his flipper.

"Here's mine, Tred, and a long life to the devil!"

"And the ducks," added the Commodore.

"Yes, and the ducks too. Now for the story."



NIGHT THREE—"She worked fust-class."

THE COMMODORE'S STORY

Talking about ducks put me in mind of this yarn of Bill's. A good many years ago one time late in the Fall we went on a gunning trip to the Chesapeake, and as Van Dam was a first-class duck-hunter as well as a good sailor we took him along to handle the schooner. There were four of us in the party—Harry Russell, Slip Fenner, me and my brother George. When we got outside the Hook it came on to blow from the East-ward and looking nasty we put back and anchored in the Horseshoe. That same morning a topsail schooner and a half-brig came in and let go near us; they were bound to Boston from some West India port and ran in for shelter.

Along in the afternoon my brother and Slip took the boat and went on board of them; when they came back they brought along a dozen coconuts, the vessel being loaded with them. After supper we were all sitting in the cabin smoking, it raining hard outside, and Harry Russell had one of the nuts broken open eating it. Bill Van Dam came and stood in the doorway leading for-

ward and asked if we had any smoking tobacco. Slip gave him a handful and then Harry asked him if he would have some cocoanut.

"No, thank yer, Harry," says Bill, "I never eat them things. Leastway I ain't eat none since I was whalin'."

"How's that, Bill?" says Slip.

"Well, ye see, Slip," says Bill, "I had a sufficiency of 'em wonct, seein' as I didn't eat nothin' else fer 'bout six months."

"Eat nothing but cocoanuts for six months, Bill! How was that?" asked Slip.

"Well, ef yer don't mind my sittin' down along with ye I'll tell ye how it came about; I've got the rheumatis in this here knee of mine an' it don't do it no good to be stood on."

"Come in, Bill," said I, making room for the old man on the transom.

So Bill sat down and spun this yarn:

When I were 'bout Mr. Russell's age or maybe a bit younger I shipped board a whaler out of New London, that's my native place. We lived next door to the capen of her, his name wur Jonathan Sturgis, his woman being a cousin of my father's, but we always called her Aunt Saree, though as I'm tellin' ye she wern't no aunt to

none of us. The bark was named after her, Saree Sturgis; I disremember her tonnage, but she was a big lump of a vessel for them days an' slower than friz molasses.

Capen Jonathan when he was to hum was all that a man oughter be, goin' regular to meetin' Sundays an' talkin' pious right along, but them as went to sea with him 'lowed he was a regular rip-roarer. But my folks wouldn't hear nothin' bad 'bout Capen Jonathan. Sailors' lies, that's what they called 'em. My father was a cooper makin' casks for these here whalers, an' the Captain give him his work, somethin' that shuts many a good seein' eye to the faults of them that brings it.

When I was growed up pretty well the Captain comes hum from a vy'ge, an' he says to father, "Yer better let Bill go along with me nex' vy'ge, and I'll make a man of him," says he.

"I need him 'round the shop," says father, "but ef he wants ter go with ye, Jonathan, I might spare him. I'll talk to mother 'bout it."

Well, hearin' that puts it into my head to go, so I just plagues father and mother 'til they gives in an' off I goes a-whalin', to the South Seas.

When we was fittin' out in the river, I was about the bark workin' along with the carpenters an' riggers, an' Capen Jonathan was fust-class; it was Billy do this, an' Billy do that, and the mate, a man by name of Morning, was just as perlite as a politician on 'lection day. But when we got through the Race an' on the back side of Long Island the tune was changed. Such swearin' and hollerin' an' lammin' I never did see. In 'bout two days that there bark was h—l afloat, an' I wished myself back in the shop 'long with dad.

We took lots of the casks out in the staves, bundles of 'em, an' the carpenter an' me had to put 'em together as they was wanted. I was doin' cooper's work an' gettin' boy's pay, three dollars a month. Then I seen through the old man's game. He was makin' a man of me an' no mistake.

"Did you ever put a cask together, Mr. Slope?"

"No, Bill," said I, "I never did."

"Well, it does take practice. I seen the time though when I could set up an' hoop twenty of 'em between daylight an' dark, gettin' ten cents apiece, an' a boy to help at the winch. I hear tell they make 'em by machinery now, but in them

days we done it all by hand. Hogsheads, casks and barrels, I've made thousands of 'em."

"How about the cocoanuts, Bill?" interrupted Slip.

"I'm coming to that, Slip."

"Well, we fished around them South Seas fer two years most, stoppin' at all kinds of places, mostly islands alive with niggers, an' done fust-class. The old man knew his business just the same as I do hoysterin', an' there ain't nobody can learn me much about that, is there, Mr. Slope?"

"I guess not, Bill," I said.

"I disremember how many fish we caught, but there was a sight of them, an' we sent hum a lot of ile in a fellow that hailed from Sag Harbor, that was bound hum, when one day we'd been after a fish an' lost it, an' the old man was tearin' mad. He an' the mate had a fight on the poop, an' when they got through the mate sends me into the bote that was towing astern after some of the gear. It was kind o' misty-like, you see them low fogs oftentimes in them waters. I gets into the bote an' fusses about tryin' to make the job last, when I looks up to hail the bark to haul

me up under her stern an' gee whitaker she ain't there.

Some durn haymaker had made the painter fast an' it had slipped an' the bote was adrift. Whalin' men is used to being in botes; they ain't like them in marchant vessels, so I wasn't skeered, knowin' the old man would never let the bote go if lookin' fer it would find it, so I lay down an' took a sleep.

It come on to blow in the night, an' when I woke up she was driftin' like blazes afore it. Nex' mornin' it come clear an' I couldn't see hide nor hair of the bark, so I got the sail up an' lets her run an' in two days come to one of them coral islands. I seen the cocoanut trees a-stickin' up out of the water an' steered for it.

When I came right to it I seen there was a reef round it, the sea breaking over them rocks like mad, an' I says, "It's all up with you, Bill Van Dam, unless there's a hole somewhere hereabouts." Most of them reefs has a hole through 'em. Well, there wern't no hole that I could find an' she goes onto the reef, and smashes all to kindlin'! Just as she struck I grabs a couple of oars an' 'fore I knew it was into the water t'other side of the reef, then I swum ashore.

I got bruised pretty considerable, an' felt bad, an' crawled up on the sand an' lay in the sun to dry. Then I looked fer something to eat. There wern't nothin' on that island but cocoanuts and crabs, these here big crabs that eats cocoanuts, breaks 'em open an' eats 'em. They'll pick up a nut in each claw an' knock 'em together until they splits. They've got claws on 'em big enough to take a man's leg off. I had more trouble than enough with them crabs.

After a while them crabs got to know what I was after an' they followed me 'bout like a flock of hens, an' when I'd throw down the nuts, off they'd go with 'em. Many's the time I've been settin' up in one of them trees eatin' a green nut an' seen a couple o' hundred of them crabs a-settin' 'bout the tree on their starns a-lookin' up waitin' fer me to throw 'em down a nut. They was dangersome to each other; fit like dogs over a bone.

I got pretty tired of that eatin', let me tell yer, an' went a-huntin' oysters on the reefs. There was plenty of 'em, extras begosh, that it was all one man could lift. They wasn't worth nothin' to eat but I found lots of pearls into

'em, so I goes to pearl fishin' an' got most two quarts.

Bye an' bye I growed pretty tired of stoppin' on that there island, an' I makes up my mind I've got to get away somehow, when one day I was a-watchin' the crabs rollin' the ripe nuts 'bout an' one of 'em goes overboard an' floats off; when I seen that nut floatin' an idee come to me: Says I, "Bill, if one of them nuts 'ill float, so will a hundred of 'em an' you on top," says I.

Over on one side of the island the soil was a bit stiffish, kind of clay-like, an' nigh onto it was a spring of this here sticky black stuff, nateral tar, I calls it. So fust I gathered all the nuts I could find, an' took 'em over to that tar spring an' plugged 'em good an' tight, then I digs a hole in the clay nigh to the water the shape of a bote, an' fills it up with them nuts, then I digs a trench an' lets the tar run into the hole till it fills up clear to the top. Then I leaves it to get hard; when she'd hardened good an' fast I dug her out, smoothed down the bottom an' topsides an' she looked right fine. Then I made a sail out of palm leaves an' put

her overboard for a trial. She worked fust-class.

After I got nuts an' water aboard I sot sail an' left the island to the crabs. 'Bout a week after, I seen the bark hove-to. I knowed her to once an' laid up for her. They was just gettin' thro' tryin' out, an' did not see me till I came pretty nigh to 'em, then I seen they seen me. All hands was hangin' over the rail exceptin' the old man an' the mate, they was aft on the poop, spyin' at me thro' the glass. Bye an' bye I come pretty close an' Dutch Ike, the carpenter, hollers out, "Dat's Bill;" then you ought to hear them yell.

I was lookin' pretty raggerty, nothin' left of my pants but the waist-band an' pockets, an' my shirt was hangin' down my back like a bunch of reef p'int's, an' I had a hat made of cocoanut leaves. I was a sight fer crows to skeer at.

I luffs up close under the bark's stern when the old man hangs over the rail an' begins to curse me like mad.

"Where's the bote you stole," he says.

"I didn't steal no bote," I says; "it stole me."

"You lie," he says; "you deserter, you slab sided son-of-a-gun, stole my best bote, after me

treatin' yer like a son. I'll take it out of your lay, darn ye ungrateful hound, yer can't come aboard here no more," he says.

"Don't want to," says I, bearing off a bit long her side. "That bark ain't no place fer a decent man," says I, "with yer rottin' horse an' mouldy bread; I've been livin' too high to want ter jine yer again, Capen Jonathan," says I.

"Yer a liar!" says he, "livin' high;" an' he laughs an' they all laughs. "Yer look like it, ye darn skeercrow; git away from my ship or I'll sink you an' yer tub," says he.

"Yer think yer own the ocean, don't yer," says I. "But I've more in them two pockets than 'd buy you an' yer old packet twenty times over," and I slapped the pearls. With this they all gives a big guffaw.

"Get to h—l out of here," says the old man, when they got through a-laughin'. "I'll tell yer father 'bout how you've treated me, stealin' my bote an' desertin' yer ship."

"Will ye?" says I. "An' I'll tell Aunt Saree 'bout you carryin' on with them gals down Christmas Island; I'll give it to them right in meetin'," says I.

When I says that all hands for'ard busted

right out laughin', and the mate he couldn't hold in, so pulls a pin an' jumps down in the waist an' hollers, "Git to yer work, ye dogs!" and the fellows draws back from the rail a bit, when the old man calls kind o' quiet like, "Mr. Morning," and the mate turns round an' goes aft again. He an' the old man talks a bit under the spanker boom, an' then the old man goes below, the mate comes to the side an' says:

"You can come aboard, Billy."

"Thank yer," says I, "but I ain't comin'. All I wants is my clothes an' the course for Walaperazer an' I'll bid yer good-day," says I.

"Yer duds has been vendued, Bill," says Bosting George. "I bought yer cote but ye can have it;" and the rest of 'em 'lowed I could have what was left of my duds, so I ses, "Bring 'em on, boys, an' I'll pay yer back whatever ye've been logged for 'em."

Then they looks at the mate and he says, "Give him his clothes, but don't none of yer give him no stores."

"Come alongside, Bill," says Bosting George, and I shoves in under the fore-chains.

They brought me my cote an' pants an' a pair o' sea-boots, an' Dutchy, the carpenter, says,

"Bill, here's my iler;" an' I takes it an' feels something done up in it an' knowed right away it was a bote's compass. When they got through passin' them things, I says, "Here, boys, here's something to take to the gals to hum," and gives each of 'em a handful of pearls out of my pocket. You oughter seen their eyes when they seen 'em.

"What's he got there, carpenter?" sings out the mate.

"Pearls, sir," says the carpenter.

With that the mate comes sneaking forward to have a look.

"What's the course for Walaperazer, Mr. Morning?" says I, as he comes up and joins the crowd hanging over the rail.

"Better come aboard, Bill," says he.

"No, thank yer," says I. "I've got my bellyful of whalin' an' I'm goin' home to set up fer a gentleman."

"What on?" says the mate.

"On what these 'll fetch me," says I, shaking a handful of pearls in my palm and then lettin' 'em stream from hand to hand like as if they was dried peas.

"Where'd you get 'em, Bill?" asks the mate, eyeing them like a house afire.

I just jerked my thumb over my shoulder astern.

"Bill, come aboard an' see the old man about it; he won't tech you."

"I ain't goin' to give him no chance to," says I. "What's the course to Walaperazer, Mr. Morning? Let me have that an' I'll bid yer good-day."

"East by Sou'," says he, "about, and it's nigh onto two thousand miles. Better come aboard, Bill," says he, "you'll never make it in that craft of yourn."

"Wal," says I, "I'm goin' to have a slap at it anyway, an' here," says I, reachin' him up a dozen or two pearls, "here's somethin' fer yer wimminfolks to hum."

"Thankee, Bill," says he, "an' I wish yer luck."

Then I left 'em.

When I got to Walaperazer there was quite a time over my bote, crowds come down to see it an' a feller bought it off me for fifty dollars, an' put a tent over it an' exhibitioned her, an' he made quite a wad. I didn't have no sense to do

that, but went around havin' a good sailor's time. A feller I met says to me, you ought to sell them pearls, says he, before they spile. I didn't know nothin' about pearls spilin', so I says, guess I had. So he says, I know a feller what will buy 'em. So we went to see the feller. He was a Jew, a mean-lookin' little cuss with a nose onto his face like the beak on a crowbird.

"They're all spiled," says he, after lookin' the lot over; "every one of 'em's gone bad," he says. "They ain't no use to me."

You jest bet when I heard that I was spiled to, but I bucks up a bit an' says, "They looks all right."

"That's just it," he says, "but they're gone soft in the middle; the whole lot ain't worth an old shoe."

"All right," says I; then I picks up the lot and puts 'em back in the bag.

Just then the feller that's with me, says to the Jew, "Can't you give him something fer 'em?"

Well, the Jew fust he says, "No," then he kind of lets up a bit, an' bye and bye after a lot of talk, I takes twenty-five dollars, half in slops and half in cash for the lot, an' darn me if I



NIGHT THREE—"They was dangerous to each other; fit like dogs over a bone."

didn't hear afterwards that there Jew sold 'em for fifty thousand dollars.

* * *

"What did you do with the twelve-fifty, Bill?" asked Fenner.

"Rummed it all in, Slip, and got into the jug afore sunrise. When I came out the man that was exhibitioning my boat hired me to stand around and lecter to the folks for a dollar a day.

"When I got through with that I shipped aboard a Boston bark an' come home, an' I ain't eat no cocoanuts since. Well, I'll bid yez all good-night," and Bill Van Dam went forward.

After Bill had gone Fenner went up on the deck and I shortly followed him. Slip was leaning against the main rigging sorrowfully watching the twin lights on the Highlands. After a spell he turned and seeing me, said, with a sigh, "Tred, just kick me, kick me good and hard." And I did.

* * *

"Fenner had an idea he was a pretty good liar himself, hadn't he, Commodore?" asked Treport.

"Well, he was, and came pretty near being in

the same class with Van Dam; but I never met but one man that was Bill's equal."

"Who was that, Commodore?" inquired Bossington.

The Commodore turned and looked over his shoulder at Stayfast. Jack was lying back in his chair, his eyes half-closed, pipe out, and his heels thrust into the gray edges of the live coals.

Treport and Bossington laughed, as the Commodore, ignoring the question, got up, put on his coat and saying good-night left the house.

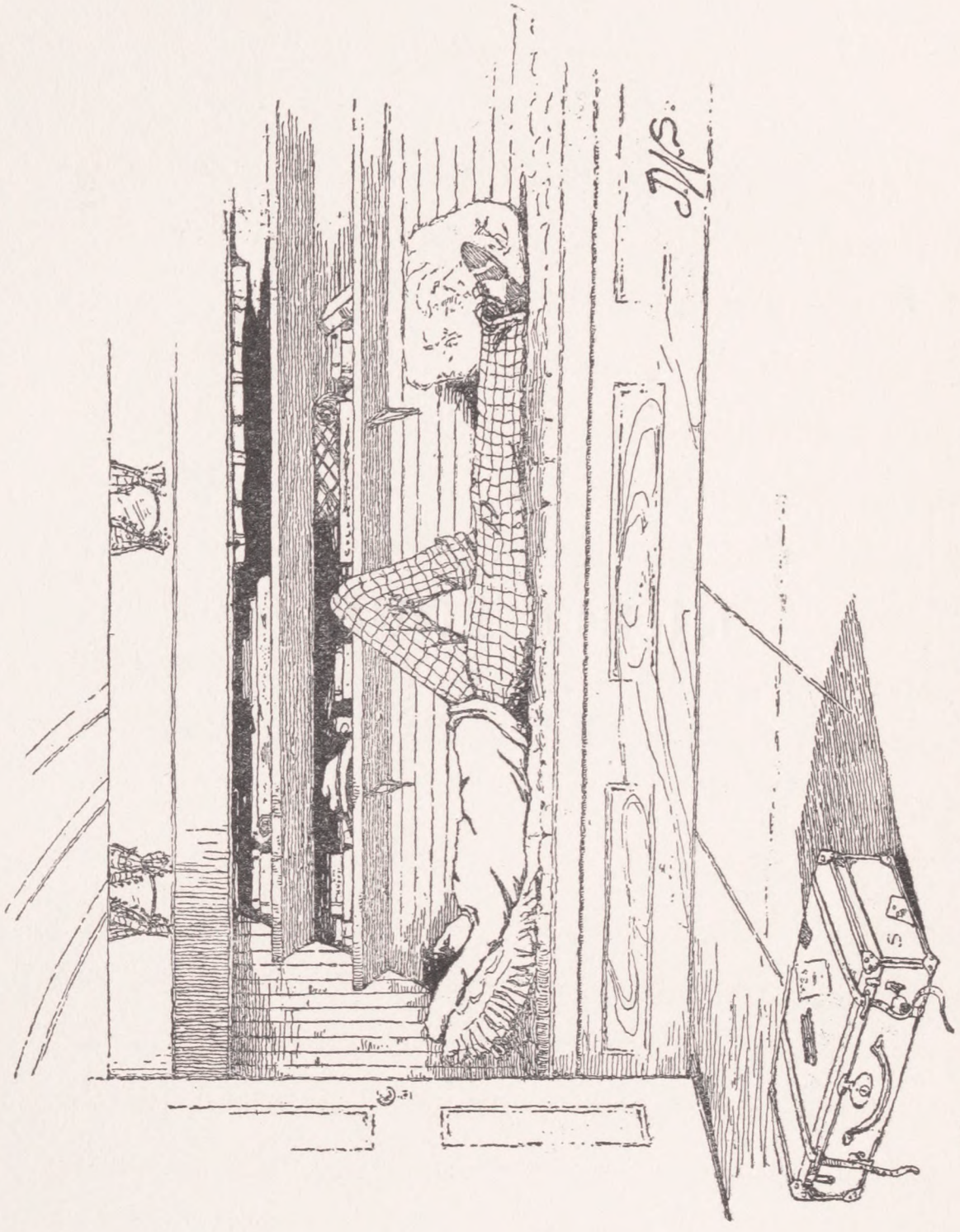
"Tred gone?" asked Stayfast, pretending to wake up.

"Yes," said Bossington.

"A fine fellow is Tred," said Stayfast; after a contemplative pause, "It's too bad he's so modest."



NIGHT FOUR



NIGHT FOUR—"I heard a very feeble voice calling my name."

NIGHT FOUR

"WELL, boys," asked Treport as he came into the room and worked his way toward the fire, "who's on deck to-night?"

"Your watch, I guess," answered Stayfast. "The Commodore's in irons and wouldn't either wear or stay this evening. I've been trying to get him round, but it's no use."

"How's that, Commodore?" asked Treport.

"I've nothing to say," replied that gentleman.

"Too much deviled duck last time," said Treport.

"Don't scratch old sores," said Stayfast, "we'll just leave him alone for a spell. He's frozen up like Munchausen's horn; wait till the fire warms him a bit and he'll tune up fast enough."

"I think we ought to make that noted gentleman the patron of our society," said the Commodore, thawing a morsel.

"What noted gentleman, Commodore?" asked Bossington.

"Munchausen."

"Not while I live," said Stayfast. "He was

a silly old liar and I've got no use for anybody that relates such bare-faced fabrications. There's not even a wash of truth on them. I believe that a yarn should sparkle like a false diamond in a Broadway store window, so you can't tell it from the real thing, until you go inside and ask the price and find out you can buy it for fifty cents a carat. What sense is there in telling a story that everybody knows to be a lie—a lie utterly devoid of facts from the first breath?"

"Professional jealousy," grunted the Commodore.

"Not a bit, Tred. I don't pretend to have the gift as you do. I'm content to go my way through the world relating actual happenings, tales of field and flood, that will bear in all their particulars the closest scrutiny. I'll admit that occasionally I slightly exaggerate the details, but that is simply to enhance the beauty of the narrative, and that sometimes my memory betrays me into mistakes as to dates and other minor particulars, but I never deliberately construct a tale out of nothing but imagination and, and, and——"

"Smoke," suggested the Commodore.

"Well, smoke, if you'll have it that way. Which

reminds me that I left my pipe home; who's got a cigar?"

"I have, Jack," said Bossington, handing over his case.

"Jack," said Treport as the worthy member paused to light up, "you ought to start in a new business."

"What's that?"

"Story analyzer. You might advertise to analyze yarns and issue certificates over your signature like those fellows do who test soap and whiskey. They'd read something like this: Dear Sir—Having purchased your yarns in the open market I find by careful analysis that they consist of ninety per cent pure facts and ten per cent exaggeration."

"You can't compare my stories to soap," said Stayfast.

"No," grunted the Commodore, "there's more lye than fat in them."

"Oh, go on insult me and you'll get what you want. You are always trying to bully me into telling yarns out of my turn. I came down here to-night expecting to have a quiet evening as a gentleman should, and I no sooner get

seated than you two start in to bull-bait me. Where's the steward?"

"Not here to-night," said Treport. "They've had a case of smallpox up where he lives and the Board of Health has quarantined the whole house."

"That's bad. I hope he don't get it, and bring it here."

"Did you ever have it, Jack?" asked Bossington.

"Well, the doctors did not call it that, Bossy, but thank goodness it's a fast disappearing disease, but common enough when I was a boy. Only the other day I was reading of an English Earl back in the Eighteenth Century who had an insane dread of the disease. He took all sorts of absurd precautions against it. Never stopping in any houses but his own, and in order to travel between his country seat and London, had a relay of houses, seven or eight of them, where he put up over night."

"I suppose he died of it at last, Jack," said Treport.

"No, strange to say, he was killed by accident."

"Killed by accident! How was that?" asked Bossington.

"Struck by lightning. He went out walking on Christmas day during a heavy snow storm, and took shelter under the eaves of a barn. The lightning struck an icicle hanging on the eaves, ran down it and killed him."

"Whew, shades of Munchausen!" exclaimed the Commodore.

"Shades of anybody you like, Tred, but facts are facts."

"Yes, facts are facts, just like figures are figures; but sometimes the former lie just as the latter do in a Life Insurance Company's annual statement."

"We don't seem to be getting any nearer to a start," said Treport, "with the Commodore in irons, and Jack backing and filling; so if agreeable, I'll open the session with a smallpox story, that seeming to be the latest subject of our conversation."

"Good for you, let's have it; but first let me stir up the fire a bit;" and Stayfast threw on a log and gave the embers a good rousing over.



NIGHT FOUR—*“He came aft holding it in his two hands, but in a careless way.”*

TREPORT'S STORY

About six seasons ago I was cruising down East in my yawl and had Len Richards with me. We were a bit short-handed and while at New Bedford I looked up an old friend and asked him to go along. He was up to his ears in business and couldn't get away, but he introduced me to a chum of his whom he said would be glad to join us. I didn't much like the looks of this chap, whom I will call Smith, because it isn't like his name, and he's still alive, I believe, and if you met him might be impolite enough to contradict the story and so endanger my social standing.

This chap turned out to be a thorough-going nuisance. I don't know whether you ever noticed it, but the genus fool is divided into any number of species. There are silly fools, wise fools, stubborn fools, willing fools, extraordinary fools, just ordinary fools, singing fools, writing fools, laughing fools, serious fools and a number of sub-orders, but the worst of all fools to my mind is the joking fool. Smith was

that kind. Everything in earth, air and water was to him nothing but the basis for a joke of some kind.

For the first two days he was sort of tame, waiting to get acquainted, but he soon blossomed out in his full beauty. Kerosene in the tobacco; knots in the halyards; noise on deck; throwing water; upsetting the dingey and all kinds of annoying tricks. We put up with his monkey-shines for a day or two and then tried to teach him a lesson, but it was no use.

One night we went ashore and after a time shook him; when we got back to the dock the dingey was gone. We shouted and yelled but he took no notice. There were plenty of boats about but no oars, so at last we paddled out with a couple of boards, and found him pretending to be asleep. It was raining, we were soaking wet, and Len was mad enough to eat him. But the fool only laughed and considered it a good joke. The next day he deliberately ran the yawl aground. This ended in a row, but the next morning he turned up all smiles and livened up things by throwing a bucket of water down the fore-scuttle on top of the oil-stove. As it happened to hit Len at the same

time there was a fight and the clown got the worst of it.

For the rest of that day he kept quiet, and we made up our minds to maroon him at the next port. But he was too foxy and would not go ashore. The day after we put in to Holmes Hole for stores, our locker having run dry. All three of us went ashore. Smith left us at the store and went for a walk over to Cottage City. After ordering what we wanted and getting them made ready, I felt in my pocket for the money to pay, and found I'd left it in my other pants aboard the boat. So I told the old chap who kept the store, and he said it would be all right, I could pay him when I came ashore. So we left the store and went for a stroll.

In about two hours we came back and stopped in to get the stuff and take it aboard. The old fellow who kept the place was behind the counter. He looked at us kind of fierce, and said:

"You can't take them things till you pay for 'em."

"Why, what's up?" said I, a bit surprised.

"Well, I ain't going to let you have them till I get the money," he said surlily.

This made Len mad and he let out, and he

and the old fellow began exchanging compliments. Just then another chap stepped up and asked: "Where're you fellows from?"

"What's that to you?" said I.

"A good deal," said he; "I've a good mind to run you in."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said I, and added, "This is a pretty dirty way to treat people."

"Oh, we are on to your game," said the fellow, who from his buttons I saw was a village cop.

"You can't cheat me," says the old fellow.

"Who wants to cheat you, you old fool!" said I. "I told you I'd pay you, didn't I? You can keep your darn truck and go to Hades with it for all I care;" and we walked out of the store.

The cop followed us down to the dock. Len wanted to lick him, but I persuaded him to put it off until a later date, and we went aboard.

It never struck me for a moment what was at the bottom of all this, being too surprised at the unexpected reception, until we got on board the yawl. Then I said to Len, "There's something on the underside of this thing; I know

those people and they never would have acted like that unless they've been put up to it."

"Who'd put 'em up to it?" asked Len.

"Why, that darn fool Smith; you just stay here and I will go ashore and do a little detective work."

"All right," he said; "but I'll kill that idiot when he comes back and ask for an explanation afterwards."

I went on shore and soon found the cop.

"Look here," I said, "I want to talk to you."

"All right," he said, putting on his best official air.

"What's at the bottom of this?"

"Bottom of what?" he said.

"Bottom of this treating us like a couple of thieves."

"You ought to know," he says.

"Well, I don't; but I'll find out darn quick, and I'll make it hot for you. I'm a friend of So-and-So," mentioning the names of half-a-dozen prominent people I knew on the island.

"Where'd you come from?" he asked, softening a bit.

"New York."

"That your yacht?"

"Yes."

"Ever been here before?"

"Yes, dozens of times. I've bought lots of stuff in this town, and paid for it too."

"Well, maybe it's a mistake; I don't know."

"I guess you don't. Who gave the old man the tip?"

"He got it over the telephone."

"Where from?"

"Cottage City; and then he sent for me to arrest you if you took the goods."

"Come up to the store with me."

"Now, look here," said I to the storekeeper, "who told you we were going to pay you with the topsail-sheet?"

"I don't know; somebody 'phoned it over to me from Cottage City. I ain't got nothin' agin you only what I heard."

"What was that?"

The old fellow hesitated, hummed and hawed a bit and then said, "They told me you was a couple of skins, and that you'd done everybody between here and Boston, and not to let you have nothin' unless you paid fer it."

"What kind of a voice did the man have who telephoned you?" I asked.

"Couldn't say."

"Did he laugh?"

"Yes, he did."

"Kind of a queer laugh?"

"Yes, it were."

"All right," said I, "I know who it was."

"Who was it?" asked the constable.

"Why, that darn fool of a fellow cruising with us. He thinks it's a funny joke."

"Wouldn't been much fun if I'd 'rested you," said his nibs.

"No, not for you or that old fool there;" and I went off aboard the yacht.

When I reached the yacht I found Len sitting on the side of the cabinhouse.

"Well?" he said.

"Just what I told you," said I. "It was that fool Smith."

We then both sat in the cockpit for some time saying nothing, but doing a lot of deep thinking. At last Richards, giving his leg a slap, sprang up and shouted:

"I have it; I'll fix that silly ass; I'll make him wish he had never played a joke in his life."

"Well, what's the scheme?" I asked.

"I'll tell you when I come back," Len said, jumping into the dingey and pulling for shore.

In about ten minutes he came back with a small bottle in his hand which I saw from the label came from the drug store. I forgot to tell you that Richards knew something about medicine, his father being a prominent doctor in New York. The old man wanted Len to take up the business but after trying it he gave it up and began to study law, saying that he didn't mind robbing people but he balked at murdering them.

As soon as he got aboard, he said, "Come down below and let's get hold of that fool's dress-suit case." After we had unstrapped it, Richards told me to find how many undershirts Smith had, and to take them out. I found two.

"Give me one," said Len, "and take the other and chuck it overboard and sink it."

I went down in the bilge, got half a brick, wrapped it in Smith's undershirt and hove the bundle overboard. When I got below again Len had gotten through with his business and we strapped the suit case up and went on deck.

"Now," said Richards, "after we get underway and he is sitting aft here, you call my at-

tention to some dirt on the deck and ask me to take a bucket and swill it off. I shall accidentally trip on something and land the water all over Mr. Smith."

"All right," said I; "but what's the game?"

"Well, the game is to get Smith to put on that undershirt in his suit case, the breast of which is well doctored with croton oil."

"What will that do?" said I.

"Why, inside of twelve hours he'll think he's got the worst case of smallpox this side of North Brothers Island, and will be only too anxious to leave us at the first port we strike. Now after he gets the shirt on, say along in the evening when all is quiet, you must casually mention the fact that smallpox is very bad at the Vineyard and that you are glad that we did not stay there longer. Then rake up all your old mossy morgue stories and relate them in your gentlest Sunday-school manner. I will deliver a lecture on the symptoms and appearance of the disease and of its frightful mortality, and how if any victim in the early stages of the disease receives a wetting it is sure to be fatal. By to-morrow we will have that darned idiot looking like the inside of a whitewash barrel."

"All right, my boy," said I, "I will do my best ; but the first and only jog I see in the programme is to get that shirt on Smith."

"Don't you worry about that," said Len ; "he'll get wet even if I have to take him in my arms and fall overboard, clasped in one fond embrace. Now shut up, there he is on the dock, yelling for the dink."

After we were underway and clear of the harbor, Smith sat down in the corner of the cockpit and began fishing to try and find out if his joke had worked, but we pretended ignorance of his inquiries.

While he was thus engaged I suggested to Richards, who had just got through coiling down, that it would be a good idea to swill the deck off. Len, after protesting that the job was unnecessary and could be done just as well at sun-down, took the bucket and began throwing water around. I called his attention to some dirt in the waterways, just behind where Smith was sitting, and drawing a full bucket he came aft holding it in his two hands, but in a careless way ; not paying attention to where he was going, his foot struck the eye-bolt of the preventer stay and losing his balance he fell and the

whole bucket of water was unfortunately emptied over our genial companion.

At first, after he had the water out of his eyes and mouth, Smith was inclined to be angry and say some disagreeable things, but Len was so earnest and so profuse in his apologies, and I was so sorry that it had happened, that Smith after a few minutes really believed that it was an accident. So it was—one kind of an accident.

I now insisted that Smith go below and shift his clothes, and Len offered to light the stove and make him a red-hot drink. He took our advice and soon appeared in a dry suit and a most cheerful mood, having swallowed the drink which Len had taken care to well caulk.

That night the wind having died out and the tide setting to the Eastward we anchored in Quicks Hole. About eight o'clock Smith began to get restless, evidently the oil was beginning to get in its work; so Len gave me the tip and we shoved the smallpox record into the conversation and opened up the Chamber of Horrors for the benefit of our lubricated friend.

He was not in a conversational mood himself; in fact he had never been so quiet since we shipped him. At last Len asked him if he did

not feel well. He admitted that he was slightly under the weather, attributing it to some ice-cream he had eaten at Cottage City.

This led Len to suggest that perhaps the cream contained ptomaine poison, and that several hundred people had died this Summer from the same cause and suggested that Smith take another large hooker of whiskey and turn in. This he rather sadly consented to do, and we bid him good-night.

Next morning Len and I got the yawl underway and shaped the course for Newport. Smith did not show up on deck, but when I was down below in the galley cooking some coffee I heard a very feeble voice calling my name.

It was Smith. He complained of feeling very unwell. I suggested several little remedies, like coffee and whiskey, but he refused to take anything. So then I asked him if he would like to have Len look at him, as Richards was kind of an amateur doctor, and he might suggest something that would relieve his troubles.

Going on deck I took the wheel from Len and told him to go below and examine Smith and diagnose his disease. In about five minutes he called me to come to him, so hauling the head

sheet aweather I hove the boat to and went down. Len was standing over Smith with a very grave expression on his face and as I came up he drew back the shirt from the patient's chest and showed me a most splendid crop of eruptions.

I was really startled, never having seen anything like that before, and I suppose my amazement showed on my face, for Smith echoed my exclamation of surprise by uttering a most sepulchral groan.

"What is it?" I asked Richards, recovering from my first fright. Len shook his head and said:

"I'm afraid he's got it."

"Got what, ice-cream poisoning?"

"No, smallpox."

At this word all the life went out of Smith's face, he was as white as a sheet, his head fell back on the pillow, he was too far gone even to groan.

I really felt sorry for him and for a minute or two regretted we had carried the joke so far, and suggested to Len that it might not really be so bad, that it was probably only sunburn, and trying to think of something else that it might

be of a mild type, the only disease that quickly suggested itself to my mind was trichinosis.

"Oh, it's not that," said Len, "only hogs have trichina. This is smallpox pure and simple. I'm sure of it. The only thing I am sorry for is that Smith got that wetting yesterday afternoon; they say that even getting your feet damp in the early stages is absolutely fatal. But I wouldn't worry if I were you, Smith; you are young, have a strong constitution, and a cheerful disposition, and after you recover you will undoubtedly consider the whole thing a good joke. It's half the battle in curing the patient in having him take a cheerful view of things, so brace up and we will soon have you comfortably bunked in the nearest pest-house."

When we were alone on deck I said to Len, "What are you going to do with him?"

"Why," answered he, "when we get to Newport we will suggest that he go ashore and see a doctor. Then one of us must call up the Health Board on the telephone and notify the Health Officer that a man whom we suspect has the smallpox, is wandering around the town. They'll jug him so quick he won't be able to tell his own name."

When we reached Newport, about four in the afternoon, Smith, recovered from some of his fright, expressed an anxiety to go ashore and see a doctor, so leaving Len to stow the sails I jumped into the dingey and soon landed him. Going into a drug store I found out the address of the Health Officer and told Smith that the doctor he wanted to see was at that place, but did not let on who he was officially. He started up Thames Street and saying I would follow him, I went into the post office. As soon as he was out of sight I slipped into a store and called up the Health Officer on the 'phone.

"Is this the Health Officer?"

"Yes."

"Well, doctor, there's a man landed from our yacht whom I think has the smallpox."

"Has the what?"

"The smallpox, doctor."

"Where is he?"

"On the way up to your office."

"Well, that is a fine piece of business. What did you let him come ashore for?"

I thought it was about time to shut off the conversation, so hung up the receiver and skipped for the boat. As soon as I got on board I sug-

gested to Len that we had better lose Newport, so we hoisted sail, got up anchor, and having a good Southwest breeze ran up to Fall River. Here we stayed that night and the next day.

My conscience began to trouble me. A joke is a joke, but it seemed to me that we had carried this thing too far, and I pictured poor Smith lying on a cot in the pest-house, serenely waiting the last call, and the whole of Newport scared stiff for fear that he had spread the disease among the people of the city. If he had only given it to some of the prices in the grocery and butcher stores I would not have minded it, but I was very anxious about the "Four Hundred."

At last I had a heart-to-heart talk with Richards and he agreed with me that we better call the joke off, so we went ashore to telephone the doctor.

"Is that you, doctor?" I asked.

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"Well, that man I told you the day before yesterday had the smallpox, hadn't it at all. We put croton oil on his undershirt and made him believe he had the disease for a joke."

"For a joke, eh," said the doctor; "a sorry kind of a joke. I suppose you've heard."

"Heard what, sir?" I asked.

"Why, that the man is dead."

I was paralyzed, but held the receiver just long enough to my ear to hear the doctor turn to some one in the room and say:

"Tell the Chief of Police those men he wants are at Fall River."

Then I dropped the telephone and made for the door.

"What's the matter?" said Len, who was waiting outside, when he saw my face.

"He's dead," I gasped.

"Who's dead?"

"Why, Smith."

"Get out," said Len. "It's one of his jokes."

"No," said I; "the doctor told me that he had died."

Richards stopped and looked at me for some minutes and then said: "If that's so, we had better get out of this;" so we hurried and got underway and that night with a fair wind and an ebb-tide went down the bay and out to sea. Just off Newport a large launch came out and followed for some time in our wake; although nei-

ther of us said anything, we were both sure it was the Chief of Police, and were mighty glad when it turned off and ran into a cove.

We never made a harbor or went nearer to any land than we could help until we got home, and all the way down at night when on deck alone I could see poor Smith's ghost and hear his jackass-like laugh.

The first thing that I found on my return was a letter from my friend in New Bedford. I opened it with trembling fingers expecting to read a confirmation of the terrible news that we had heard at Fall River, but after some commonplace remarks came a paragraph asking:

"What the deuce did you fellows do to Smith, when you had him off on that cruise? Since he got back to New Bedford he hasn't played a single joke on anybody."

I didn't read any more. I jumped for the door and yelled to Len:

"Smith's alive."

"That's what I told you," said Len. "I knew that his dying was only one of his darn jokes."

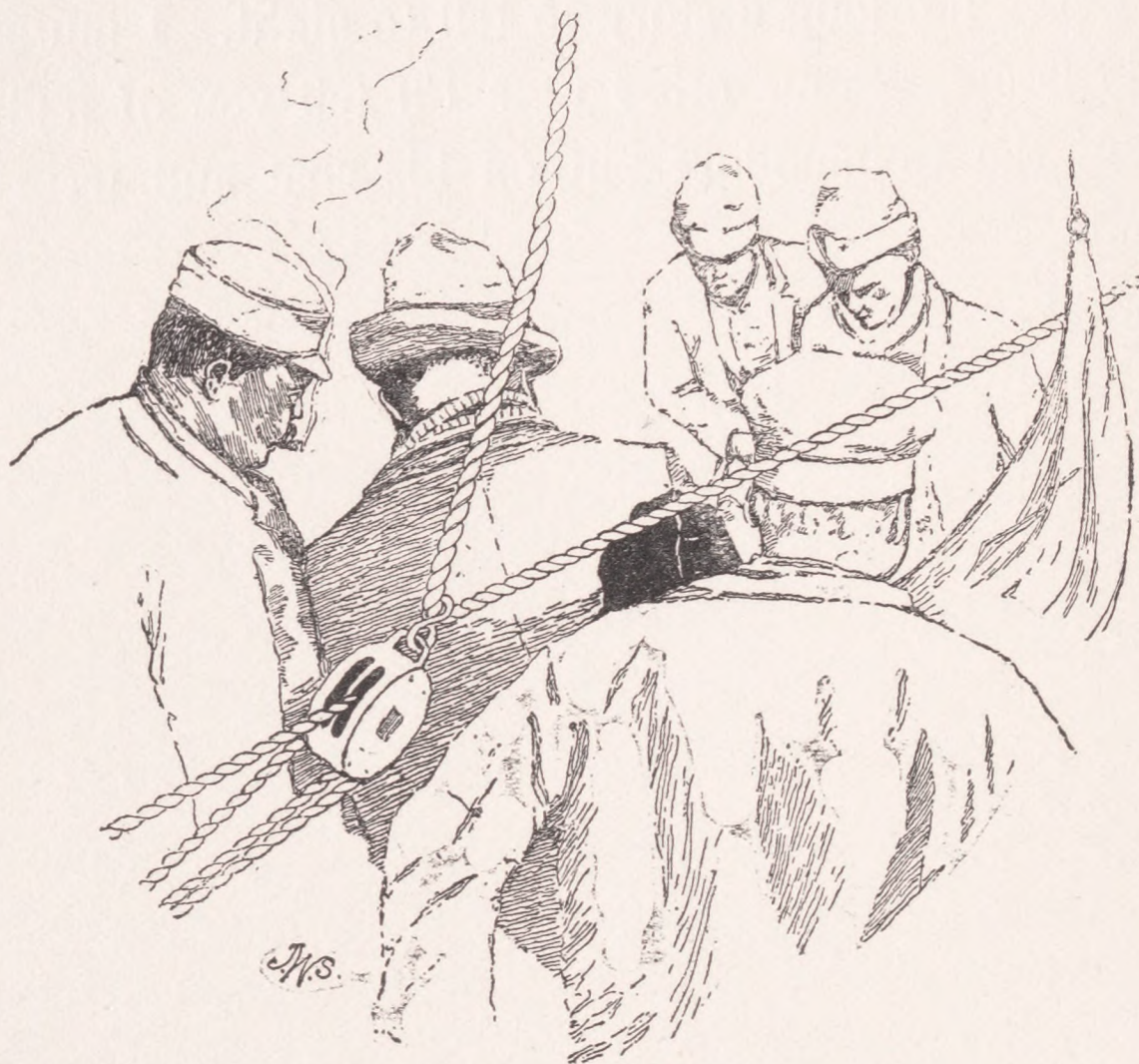
* * *

"I don't believe in playing practical jokes," said the Commodore, when Treport had finished.

"I played one once when I was a young fellow that cost a man his life."

"How was that, Commodore?" asked Bossington.

"It's too long a story to tell to-night. I must go home. Some other time I'll tell you of it;" and the Commodore put on his coat and went out.



NIGHT FIVE—"Who's goin' to kill the bally brute?"

NIGHT FIVE



NIGHT FIVE—"Thee be a foine shot, Master."

NIGHT FIVE

STAYFAST and Bossington were warming up in front of the blaze when Treport sailed in and reaching up between them came to an anchor.

"What's that you're burning?" he asked.

"Whight's spinnaker pole; it's been lying around the yard here for months breaking everybody's shins, so I told Sam to cut it up, the other wood having given out," answered Stayfast.

"Whight will be sore about it," said Bossington.

"Don't care if he is; no business to leave his spars about the grounds. The club has provided a shed for them and they ought to be in it. It will teach him a lesson," said Stayfast.

"Well, that may be," remarked Treport; "but I am thinking you've killed the wrong pig. That is not Whight's pole."

"Not Whight's pole? Well, whose is it?"

"Yours."

"Mine: I guess not."

"Well, it is," insisted Treport, picking up and examining a length. "I put that wrapping on

myself the day we sprung it off Larchmont, when the Commodore let her get aback. I tell you it's your pole, Jack."

"How did it get out of the shed, if it's mine?"

"Why, last Sunday Sandford was looking for his spars, and in the usual way pulled out everybody else's and left them lying outside; and I suppose your pole was never put in the rack again."

"Well, I'll be darned, that's one on me. Just shove the button. It reminds me of a story father used to tell."

STAYFAST'S YARN

Many years ago there lived over on Long Island on Eatons Neck an old fellow by the name of Staunton, who had plenty of money to spend and nothing to do but spend it. He used up most of his time shooting, fishing, and drinking rum. He also had a farm on which he kept a lot of fancy stock, particularly poultry, of which he was very fond.

One morning late in the Fall, he and a crony, an old bottle-nosed, red-faced Judge, went ducking down on the beach that lies between Duck Harbor and Smithtown Bay. They lay in the blind for several hours without getting a single bird, and at each disappointment took a pull at a large consoler which they had brought along. By the time it got too sunny for shooting, they were sheeted home, and every single bird looked like a flock.

On the way back they came upon a man watching a bunch of tame birds swimming in a creek, and old Staunton facetiously inquired

what the owner would charge for a shot at the fowl.

After a short consideration the fellow said, "Well, I guess a dollar a shot."

"All right," says the Judge, hauling out two dollars; "one for each of us."

Then they up and fired. Just one duck escaped; the rest lay either dead or fluttering on the placid bosom of the creek.

The fellow helped rake out the eleven corpses and after stringing 'em, handed six to old Staunton and five to the Judge, and homeward they continued.

All the way home old Staunton was chuckling to himself.

"What yer laughing at, Tony?" says the Judge.

"Laughing," says Staunton, "at the way I fooled that fellow. He didn't know it, but I pulled both barrels to once."

"So did I," chuckled the Judge.

The next morning the old man was sleeping off his booze and dreaming that he and the Judge and half a score of their particular cronies were swimming about in a pitch lake in Hades, while a lot of young devils on the banks were heav-

ing chunks of stone at their heads, and yelling, "Duck, you old sinners, duck!" when a servant woke him.

Ordinarily the old man would have cursed the domestic for disturbing his slumbers, but the dream was so realistic and harrowing he was glad to be awakened.

"John wants to see you, sir," said the maid. John was the farmer.

"Well, tell him to come up," says old Staunton, giving a groan as he lifted his head and sat up.

"What's the matter, cow run dry or the hens stopped laying?" he asked, as the man came in.

"No, zur, it bain't neither, zur," replies John, who was a Somersetshire man, "her come 'ome, zur, with her wing broken."

"Who came home with her wing broken?"

"The big drake, zur."

"Well, what the devil of it? Is that any excuse for waking me up at this hour?"

"The flock's missing, zur."

"What flock?"

"Our ducks, zur."

Old Staunton sat up a bit higher in bed, pulled off his red nightcap, scratched his head, and

thought for a minute, then said: "John, you go down in the cellar and look at those birds hanging there. Take a good look at 'em, John, and then come back to me."

In about five minutes John returned with a tear in his eye and a warm grin round his mug.

"Well?" asked the old man.

"Thee be a foine shot, Master. How come thee to miss the big drake, zur?"

The old man reached over the side of the bed, but wasn't quick enough,—the boot hit the back of the closing door.

* * *

"Commodore ought to have heard that story," said Treport. "Where is he?"

"Home," said Bossington. "His brother from California is visiting him."

"That means a lot of new yarns. His brother is a grand liar; better than Tred. More imagination and less hypocrisy. Tred is the poorest liar of the whole family," remarked Stayfast. "But I must admit I have learned a great deal about the creation of fiction during my long association with Slope."

"Can I come in?" said a voice, at the half-open door.

"Sure, Cap, come right in and set down, and warm your feet. How'd you blow down this way?"

"Saw a light in the window, and came over," said Sailing Master Skirvine, after greeting the three gentlemen.

"Glad to see you. What's your favorite flower?"

"Well, Mr. Stayfast, a little Medford and lemon, if you don't mind."

"Shove the button, Bossy, and tell Sam to make it two."

"Three: same for me," added Treport.

After the hot rum was in hand Stayfast turned to the Captain, and asked, "Skirvine, how'd you come to get in this yachting game, a deep-water dog like you?"

"Oh, just drifted into it, Mr. Stayfast, just drifted into it. You see I came here in Commodore Wallace's time, that's back some thirty years. You remember Commodore Wallace, Mr. Stayfast." Jack nodded. "Well, he had a boy who wasn't that strong and they sent him a voyage to China, in a ship I was third mate in, the Palladin of Portsmouth. She was a vessel of seventeen hundred tons, a big vessel and a fine

sailer. I kind of took care of the boy, looked after him for the Commodore, and when we got home he offered me the job of master of his yacht. That was the Regina, she's broke up long ago. I staid with the Commodore for three years and then went to sea again, but when he built the Crusader, I came back and took her and have been yachting ever since.

"This scar you see on my forehead I got that voyage we made with young Wallace. I got that from the club of a topmast stunsel. We came round the Horn and having a fair wind, blowing a small gale, the mate orders the fore-topmast stunsel set, as nothing was drawing for'ard. Just as we had her most boom ended the out-haul parted. I hollers to the man in the top to pass the tack down foreside of the yard, so we could lower the sail and pass it aft, when old Fussguts, the mate, comes rushing for'ard and yells to let go the halyards. So of course we did, and the sail blows out over the bows and fouls up in the head gear. In trying to clear it, the club swung in and gave me that clip on the head; it was a nasty crack and nothing bothered me for some hours after."

"I'd like to ask you a question, Captain," said

Bossington. "Which is the sheet on a studding-sail?"

"Well, I call the rope fitted to the outboard clew the tack, that reeves at the boom-end, but some say that's the sheet. I was taught that the stunsel sheet came away from the inboard clew."

"What did you want to know that for?" asked Stayfast.

"Why, because I had an argument last Summer with Bellman as to which was the sheet of a spinnaker," explained Bossington.

"It depends on what you call a spinnaker. Is it a fore-and-aft sail or a squaresail?"

"It's a steering sail, sir, and I should think its clews would be named same as a squaresail," said the Sailing Master.

"Well, then the inboard clew is the sheet, and the tack reeves through the end of the pole."

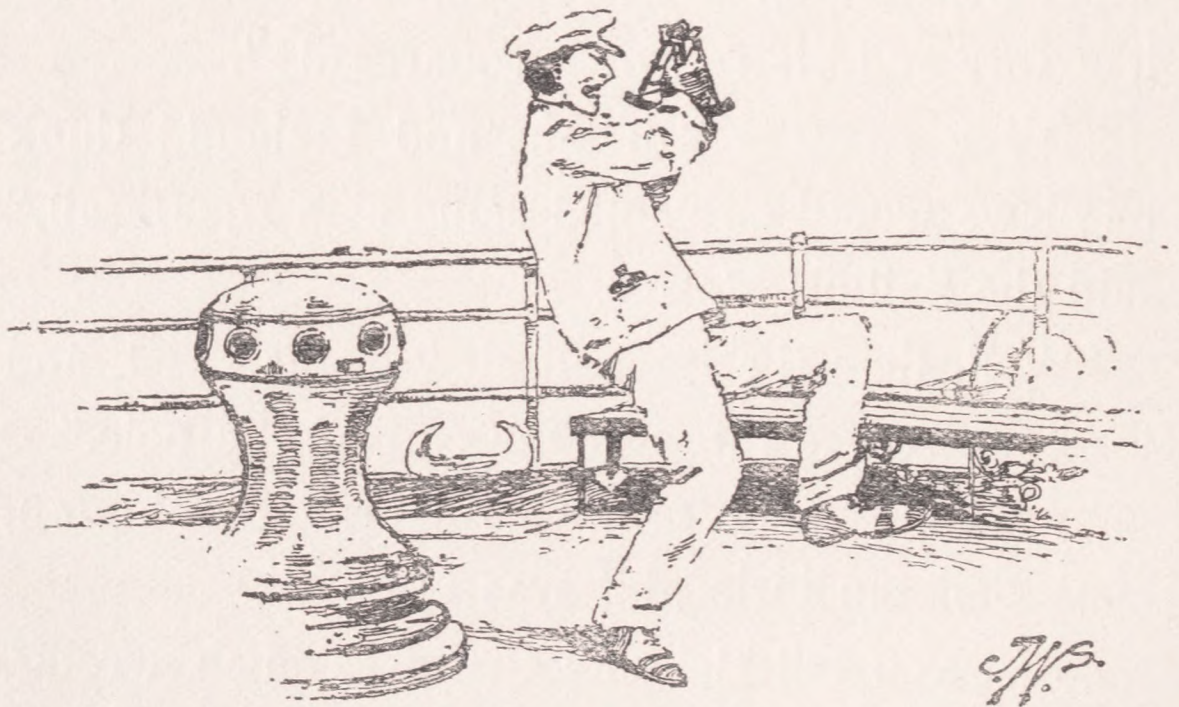
"That's what I said," explained Bossington, "but Bellman insisted I was wrong."

"Just you tell Bellman that I say he's wrong. Add my compliments so as to soften the blow; and now, Cap, what was the strangest adventure you ever had at sea."

"The strangest adventure? Well, I don't know as I ever seen anything very queer, but

oncet, and that was when I was a youngster aboard a bark called the Dovey Bell."

"Well, let's have it," said Stayfast, hitching up his chair and lighting his pipe; "only mind, Skipper, we don't allow any but solemnly sworn-to, true stories to be told in front of this fire."



NIGHT FIVE—"The old man had his gun on the sun."

SKIRVINE'S STORY

When I was about eighteen years old, and had just got out of ordinary into able-bodied, I shipped aboard a small bark called the Dovey Belle. She was a well found vessel of about five hundred tons, hailing from a Nova Scotia port. The skipper and chief were Blue-Noses, and the second mate a Jerseyman from down Cape May way. For'ard we had eight men and a cook, a North Carolina darkey. The steward aft was an Englishman, a little fellow who was drowned falling off the plank while coming aboard after making a night of it in Mobile.

The bark was a fine sailer, easy on her helm, and the grub tol'able good. The only mean thing about the vessel was a big Newfoundland dog that was the pet of the Oldman's. This dog Sambo was a nasty brute, and all hands hated him. She had a wide house aft, and the main braces belayed on the rail of it, so that in order to take a pull on them, it was necessary to go on the poop. Every time a man went aft

to take a pull on the braces that darn brute of a dog would make a grab at his heels.

Sailors, as you know, sir, like to go barefoot in warm latitudes; but on this bark every time we went aft we had to put on our boots on account of that brute's tricks. When he jumps at us the Oldman would take no notice unless we pulled a pin or kicked at him.

Then he'd say, "Naughty Sambo! come here, you bad dog; mustn't bite sailorman;" or some such silly woman-talk. The first mate, who, the steward said, was trying to join warps with the skipper's daughter, made a great pretense of liking the dog, and would call us down if we kicked or hit him.

The darn brute knew this and if the Oldman was below would run for shelter behind the mate's legs. He was up to snuff, for he never ventured off the quarter-deck unless the Oldman was with him. He would chase us to the break, and bark and snap, but never came down into the waist. At night he slept in the Oldman's berth, and generally kept out of the way unless the chief mate was on deck.

The second mate hated the brute and every chance he got of giving Sambo a reminder, he

gave it to him. This got the skipper down on him, although a better sailor, or more willing officer, never trod a deck. It used to make me sick sometimes when at the wheel to hear a man like the skipper talking baby-talk to this big brute of a dog, and often the second mate, whose watch I was in, from behind the Oldman, would make fun of him; it was all I could do to keep from laughing out loud.

Well, one day the mate sings out to take in the slack of the weather main-brace, when a fellow in his watch named Dick Deal, without thinking about his boots, jumps up on the poop to obey. He throws the coil off the pin when the dog comes sneaking up behind and takes a nip of his ankle. Dick gives a yell and with a hand on the bite hobbles for'ard and sits down on the sill of the folk'sel, crying and swearing by turns. As soon as we got through with the braces we joined him, and held a council of war. Some was for telling the Oldman that they wouldn't go on the poop unless the dog was tied up, others insisted he ought to be killed.

"Who's goin' to kill the bally brute?" says Liverpool George. "He won't come into the waist, 'less the Oldman's along of him. Yer

ain't none of yer got man enough to kill him on the poop under the skipper's nose, have yer?"

"Well, I ain't agoin' to get bit like Dick here," says another. "Let the Oldman haul them braces along with the mates, I'll not touch 'em while that brute is prowling that poop."

"Bite yer bad, Deal?" asks the Second Mate, coming round the house with a bottle in his hand.

"Yes, sir, pretty bad bite," whimpers Dick.

"Here's some liniment the Oldman sent ye to rub on. I just told him he ought to shoot that devilish brute."

"So he ought, sir," agreed all hands.

"Carpenter," says the Mate, after he had examined the hurt, "when you was cleaning out the paint locker yisterday did you see a small bag of green powder?"

"Yes, sir," says Chips; "I seen it in a brown paper bag, sir."

"Well, don't none of yer eat that stuff. It's sure death. Now then," he hollers, so they could hear it aft, "get that taykle and get a drag on that fore-sheet, do you want the foot in the top?"

After we got the sail trimmed a committee of two called on the cook.

"Doctor," says I, "what particular dish of food does Sambo most like?"

The coon stops stirring the pot and placing his finger to his cheek thought profoundly for a minute and then said:

"Well, I suspect dat a large meat ball is about what he reaches for de quickest and swallows de rapidest."

"Got any on hand?"

"No, ain't got none dis day, but I make some for breffast to-morrer."

"Well, you just lose two on your way from the galley to the cabin. Drop 'em on the main hatch."

"If de ship happen to roll dat particular moment, maybe dey fall offer de dish, who knows?"

Next morning the ship rolled at the right time, and two extra big meat balls were found on the hatch. Then there was a long dispute as to the best time to plant them. It was admitted that it must be done some time when the Oldman was below, as he watched the dog too closely, and would be sure to see him pick the food up. At last it was decided as the mate would have the

morning watch the dog would come on deck with him. Liverpool, who was in the mate's watch and had plenty of nerve, agreed to take the first trick and place the bait. It was to be placed in the coil of the spanker sheet, a favorite spot for Sambo to slumber in the early hours of the day.

When Liverpool came forward at six o'clock all hands were waiting to hear the news, the watch in, having left particular orders to be wakened if asleep.

"Well?" asked Shark Joyce, who was the oldest hand and therefore by right of age the official questioner.

Liverpool's only answer was to shape his fists and opening his mouth make a pretense of swallowing them. There was a suppressed cheer.

About four bells in the forenoon watch Sambo began to act queer. I was at the wheel. He walked in circles and staggered round, seeming not to see clearly. Pretty soon the second mate noticed him.

"What ails that dog, Skirvine?" he asked.

"Don't know, sir; he seems like he was going to have a fit."

“Jump below and call the Captain,” he ordered, taking the wheel from me.

I went down and told the Oldman that Mr. Dayrell thought the dog was going to have a fit, and he jumped for the deck.

Poor old Sambo was fast going. The Oldman, tears running down his face, and aided by the steward and the mate, was doing the best for him. They had blankets and hot water, and tried to force medicine down his throat, but it was no use. Sambo slowly stiffened out and gave up the ghost, just as five bells struck. I really felt sorry for the Oldman, it was just as if he had lost a child. The mate also tried to weep but only squeezed out about one tear. The steward and second mate made a pretense of joining in the lamentations, but the latter was making faces behind the Oldman's back, and trying to upset the steward, who nearly broke down several times. After my relief the mate kept me to assist carrying water and things, so I was present at the death.

After it was over I went for'ard and there had to tell to the smallest particular everything that had happened. Little sorrow at this time

was felt in the folk'sel. I regret to say that there was great rejoicing in a quiet way.

The cook and carpenter were called aft and questioned by the Oldman, who suspected what had caused Sambo's tragic death,—or murder he called it; but both denied having anything to do with the tragedy. Cook swore he hadn't given the dog anything to eat, and the carpenter with equal truth asserted that the key of the paint locker had not been out of his shop to his knowledge.

That afternoon the Oldman got a bolt of new canvas out of the lazarette and he and the mate made the dog a shroud into which they sewed him, with half-a-dozen iron dogs and a couple of old sheeves for ballast. At sunset the Oldman, after a lot of backing-and-filling, called all hands into the waist, and had a regular sea funeral. At the conclusion of a speech in which he roundly denounced the murderers of his dear pet, Sambo was launched overboard, and went down with a splash. That night it fell calm, and was calm all the next morning and the bark lay wallowing about, everything slatting.

On shifting the watch the mate sent me aloft to overhaul and stop the buntlines, and while up

there I took a look around and could see not a sign of sail anywhere about. Just before noon, the Oldman and the mate were aft shooting the sun, and two of the watch were on the lee cat-head doing some little job, when one of them—Dick, the fellow who'd been bitten—hears a noise like a porpoise blowing alongside and looks down. He gave a shriek and jumped to his feet yelling, "There's Sambo! there's Sambo!" and springs to the deck and flies aft like the devil was at his heels.

The Oldman had his gun on the sun, but hearing Dick's yell he drops it, and comes running for'ard with the mate after him.

As soon as he sees the dog he grabs the slack of the staysail sheet and making a bowline slips it over his buttocks and orders us to lower him away. When he got down to the water he hollers for a line and I dropped him one, and he slings the dog and shouts to hoist away. We did and when we got the dog over the rail he just flopped, he was that tired out. Well, we all hung spellbound over that dog and forgot the Oldman, who was getting soused every time she rolled, until Dutchy, the boy, who was holding the turn, calls out that the skipper was drown-

ing, when we turned to and hauled him aboard, wet as a rat but delighted to have his dog back.

He and the mate got a tarpaulin and carried the beast aft in it, and laid him in the sun on the poop, when the Oldman and the steward dried him off with cloths. The Oldman was nearly hysterical with joy, and it was funny to see him dancing about the poor brute and calling him every pet name he could lay his tongue to.

We were a pretty sick crowd for'ard and nobody had much to say. Most of us had regretted what we'd done, no sooner was the dog over-side. Sailors are always good to animals, and never will hurt one knowingly, much less take their life, unless it be a shark or a porpoise, the first out of hatred and the second because he is good eating. The carpenter and second mate were the only two who openly rejoiced in having cooked Sambo's goose. The cook when he saw the returned dog went white with fright and could not be made to go near him.

Of course, there was the usual conflagration in the folk'sel that dog watch, and the second mate came for'ard and had a look in. He and the carpenter scouted the idea that the sea-waif was Sambo. They insisted it was another dog.

Says Chips, "You can't tell me that there dorg ever got free of that there canvas. He's at the bottom right enough."

"Well, if that ain't Sambo," said Shark Joyce, "what dorg is it? That's what I'm asking ye, Mr. Dayrell and Carpenter. Dorgs ain't drop-pin' from the sky, and they ain't swimmin' off-shore some ten days' sailin'. Ef that dorg ain't the Oldman's dorg, I'll eat 'im."

"Well, you'll have to, for I'll swear it's not the old dog. He was dead and cold dead when he went overside," said the Second Mate.

"Don't he look like Sambo, sir?" asked I.

"Yes, I'll admit he does; but lots of them Newfoundlands look alike. Who was aloft this forenoon?" he asked.

"I was," said I.

"See any sails?"

"No, sir; I took a look around and seen nothing."

This kind of confused the mate, and all hands grinned.

"Well, there must have been; that dog's fell off some other vessel that's in our grain;" and so saying he went aft.

"Chips," says Shark, "you and the mate is

like them folks ashore as preachers calls skiptics —them as don't believe what they sees is plain to them and other folks what sees it plain."

"Maybe I be," says Chips; "but I ain't afeared of no ord'nary dorg."

"Afeared of no dorg?" says Shark, getting up and going out of the folk'sel. "No or'nary dorg, no; but a dorg what can work clear of that there canvas after goin' down a thousand fathom and then swim for four, nigh five watches, ain't no or'nary dorg, an' I ain't goin' to say I ain't afeared, carpenter, howso'er ye be."

Well, the next day Sambo got on his feet again, was quite lively; but a better-natured or behaved dog no vessel's crew ever saw. He'd lost or forgotten all his old tricks. You might have gone strip naked on the poop for all he'd bother you. In the forenoon watch, me and the second mate and Joyce were setting up the lower main rigging, when down comes the dog and joins us, stands there wagging his tail like a pleased cat. Next afternoon when I goes for'ard to call one bell, there he is sleeping in the middle of the folk'sel floor with Shark's best oiler under his head. Strange to say, he took a great liking to Mr. Dayrell and the carpenter and

didn't seem to care for the Oldman or the mate. Of course, Sambo's reformed manners was the subject for'ard and many were the explanations.

Says Shark: "It ain't queer; if you'd gone down to where that dorg has an' come ter life again, after fetchin' soundings in a thousand fathom, I'm livin' to say you would be different from what you was, seein' as you was different afore you went by the board."

"It reminds me," said the Second Mate, one dog watch when we was gathered listening to him and the carpenter overhauling things proper, "of an uncle of mine who ran a tide-mill. He got prosperous and let it get the weather of him or else it was the dust in his throat, but along about fifty, he got to sitting out high-water in a tavern called the Cat-and-Mice. When it came time to go back and start the mill he was three sheets in the wind. To save going round by the bridge, he'd shipped a plank over the tail-race. One night he comes back, but some one had embargoed the plank, and he walks over-side into the race. The tide was running and he floats off downstream, fetching up on a sedge bank, where he lay till morning, when a fisherman fetched him off. Well, just like Sambo,

that there ducking changed his manners; he never went near no tavern no more, and spent high-tide time a-singing hymns and reading the good book."

Well, to cut the yarn short, we made port and got rid of our cargo of staves and swept hold to load sugar in bags. One day while we was waiting for the lighters to come off, a Yankee lying alongside of us gets underway, and her crew being well rumified gets to singing and hollering as they ways her hook. Sambo gets up with his paws on the rail and watches them, when just as the schooner trips, over the rail he goes and swims for her.

Our boat was ashore with the Oldman, so we hollers for a bum-boat to pick the dog up, but the schooner's crew hollers for him to leave him alone. Well, come to tell, Sambo gets alongside the schooner, and they haul him aboard, and off he goes and that's the last we seen of that dog.

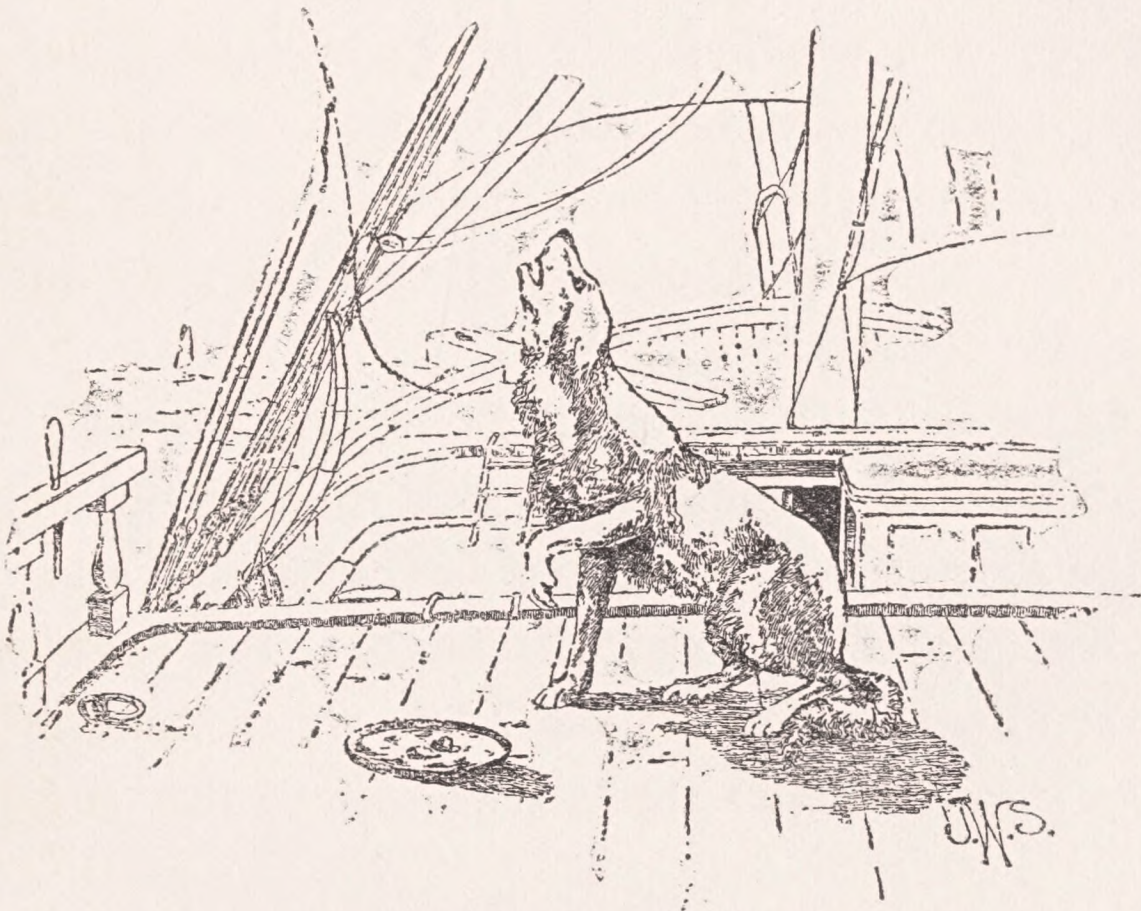
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"Do you suppose it was the same dog, Captain?" asked Treport.

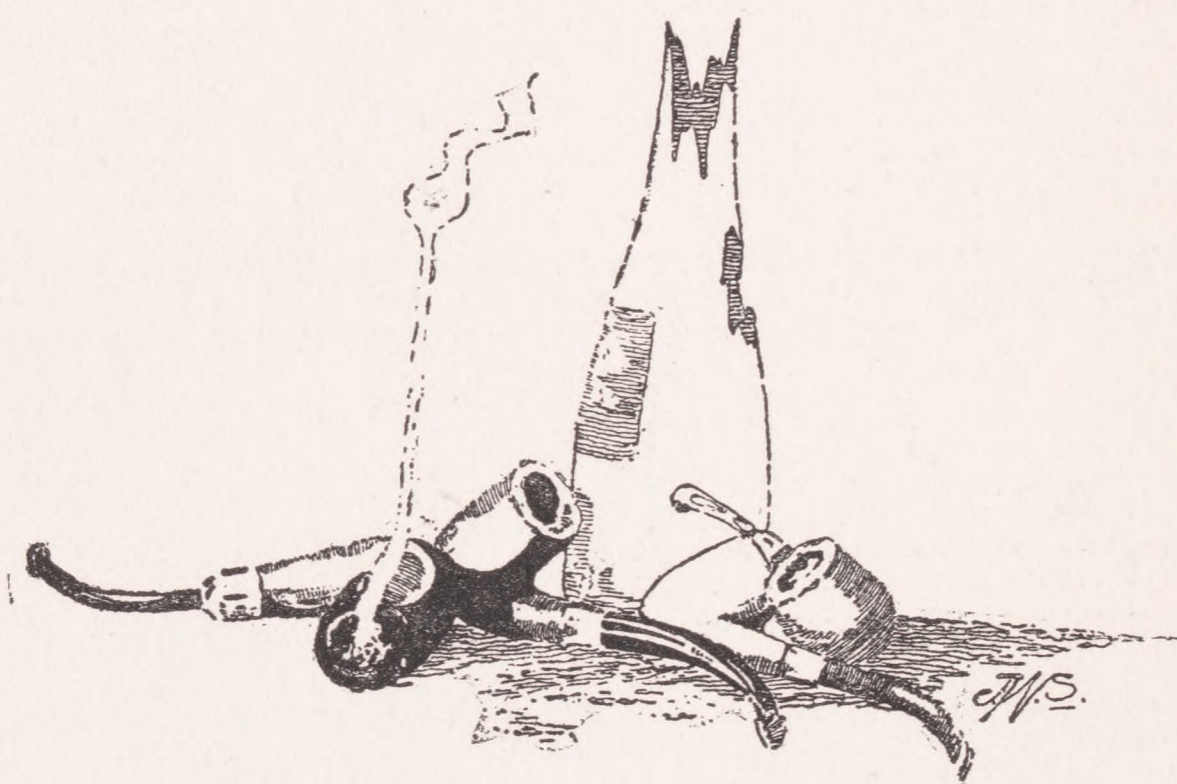
"Couldn't say for sure, sir, but it looked exactly like him."

"What do you think, Jack?"

"I'm no authority on dogs, my boy, but if you ask about the yarn I'll say this: it's worth another drink, a large, full, able-bodied drink, so touch the button."



NIGHT FIVE—"Poor old Sambo was fast goin'."



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